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# The Revealing Christ



*The Presiding Bishop's  
Book for Lent*

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BY VARIOUS AUTHORS

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*Issued under the direction of  
The Most Reverend James deWolf Perry, D.D.*



PUBLISHERS  
HARPER & BROTHERS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

1935

35-2794

THE REVEALING CHRIST

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The  
Revealing Christ



¶This book was compiled and edited for  
the Presiding Bishop by *Bernard Iddings  
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Revealing Christ

By



## *Ash Wednesday*

MARCH 6

### THE LENTEN CALL

THE PURPOSE OF GOD TO REVEAL HIMSELF PRECEDES EVERY attempt to seek Him, every desire of the mind to comprehend Him, every aspiration of the soul to have communion with Him. The longing cry, "Oh, that I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat," is met always by the discovery that His is the first quest, mine the response. The marks of His approach are found where least expected in most familiar and often homely ways. If one tries to apprehend Him through the mysteries of birth and death they lead to a stable in Bethlehem and, at last, to the contemplation of the Cross. Between these two there winds the long road through the struggles and hardships, the trials and sufferings, of human life. Where the way becomes bewildering, and lost apparently in a maze of difficulty and perplexity, even there are seen the footprints of the Son of God, driven by the Spirit—as all the sons of men seem to be driven by some relentless force—into the wilderness. Nowhere is His presence hidden from me. "If I go down to hell thou art there. . . . If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts . . . even there. . . ." Through the gathering clouds in Lent I strain my eyes to see God; and I behold One, through whom He is revealed, under the pressure of solitude and want and temptation.

The souls of men find comfort and assurance in the presence of a Saviour who goes before them into life, to endure affliction, and to undergo His passion. Human courage, high example, companionship in sorrow—all are found in Him.

The Christian will gain help from these; but he will look beyond them, to see a greater and more potent fact appear. The knowledge of God, made possible for us through His entrance into the world that He has made, is the substance of one's experience with Christ in Lent. In that knowledge is the only satisfaction for the deepest human need. Religion too readily may be reduced to the practice of self-examination and self-discipline, good though these are. Exercise of self-denials in the use of food and time, far from enough, may sometimes, and too easily, divert the soul from the quest of life eternal. "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Temptation at its worst is found in that which lures the soul from this supreme quest. How clearly Jesus in His hours of decision points the way to it from things of earth: "Not by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" . . . "Worship the Lord thy God, Him only shalt thou serve."

The choice between the way of Christ and the way of the world does not wait until the open vision makes the issue plain. There are stepping-stones laid for the wayfarer in places where the light has not yet broken. The full revelation of God's glory is not at once discerned. "The things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," are shown to us meanwhile in lowlier ways in which God Incarnate chooses to reveal Himself. He manifests forth His glory in a village household through an act of mercy which only the servants which drew the water knew. He rises triumphant over the powers of evil in a lonely conflict on a desert hill. He gains conquest over human illness in its ghastliest form through solitary nights of prayer and fasting. He shows Himself to be men's Lord and Master by kneeling down to wash their feet. He is highly exalted and possessed with a name which is above every name by the humbling of Himself, by His becoming

"obedient to death, even the death of the Cross" . . . "crucified in weakness." In such wise is the beauty of God's Being disclosed—in life and in Lent—to human eyes.

Only after passing through the wilderness with Christ, learning there to pray not for bread alone but for forgiveness, for strength to meet temptation and for deliverance from evil, can the seeker after God attain at last the utmost heights of praise. A Lent well kept with Christ in humble tasks can open my eyes to the vision of the risen Christ on Easter Day. Then after long discipline with Him can I come to say, with understanding heart, "Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory." As I come thus to know God, the revealing Christ will make known to me my nature and my destiny, what I am and what I some day, with God's help, may come to be.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

#### PRAYER

O God, who art from everlasting to everlasting the creator and upholder of all things, the source of life and light, Thy wisdom is unsearchable, reaching from one end of the world unto the other.

Throughout the ages Thou hast led Thy children along the path of the knowledge of righteousness and peace. Thy holiness has overruled our folly and our sin; and in Thy light do we see light.

We give thanks to Thee for the revelation of Thyself through the gift of Thy Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, who,

by His temptation, cross and passion, has won the conquest over sin and made us heirs of eternal life.

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O God, who art the source of knowledge and of power, mercifully look upon Thy people in their time of need: Illumine the minds, strengthen the wills, kindle the hearts of the bishops, pastors and congregations of Thy Church. Grant that by them all Thy loving purpose may be known and through Thy grace abundantly fulfilled, even the redemption of mankind, which Thou hast promised through Thy Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.



*Thursday*

MARCH 7

PRAYER

TO SEE CLEARLY, TO UNDERSTAND, TO FEEL THAT THINGS are explained, to have been shown how to look at life and the way to handle his affairs, to have things hidden brought to light, to feel guided into truth, to know his own resources and his deficiencies;—that is the burden of every man's desire. We confront every seer and teacher with an insistent demand to be taught, to be shown, to have the real issues of life revealed. It is here that our Lord occupies His unique and unrivaled place as the Master of Life and Men. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Christ's claim to be the great Teacher stands preëminent and absolute. He is supremely the Revealing Christ.

His coming amongst us was in the manner of a true prophet, a faithful interpreter of life. It was in terms of the affairs of our ordinary daily life that He spoke. While He lifted up our eyes to behold the things that are very far off, yet He made today and tomorrow and eternity comprehensible by revealing the fabric, the substance, of the normal experiences of every human being. He manifested the glory of the commonplace. He came, and He comes, that we may live our daily lives not as human beings merely, but as Sons of God, inheritors of Life Eternal; and yet much more, as participants in life revealed and life seeking fulfillment, the more abundant life. All men pray. Prayer is a distinguishing mark of a human being as belonging to a higher form of creation. Men may pray badly. They may forget to pray. Many would find it difficult to describe their

prayers as truly religious actions, or even as manifesting human intelligence. Yet they do pray. All men pray. Prayer is one of the fundamental, basic activities of the race of human beings. As such, it must concern itself with the commonplace, the ordinary daily living of men.

It is in this realm of prayer that men most critically require revelation, interpretation and encouragement. We find the Disciples asking our Lord to reveal the true nature of prayer, to teach them how to pray. They were religious persons, men who had been praying all their lives; and yet they had need to be taught. Their experience is common to all who pray. We become fearful of a mechanical routine of devotion. Conscious of the manifold mysteries of Prayer, we are confused and embarrassed by the poverty of our Prayer-life. What does Jesus reveal of the nature of Prayer; how does He teach us to pray?

### *I. He reveals the proper Approach to Prayer.*

Prayer is something more than saying prayers. Fundamentally it is holding conversation with God. In Prayer we are talking with Him, thinking with Him, waiting upon Him. Prayer begins with and depends upon the consciousness, the awareness of the Presence of God. We acquire by Prayer the habit of listening to God. But Prayer is not merely our movement towards God; it is, in reality, our response to the perceived overture of an Ever-coming God who seeks us.

The first requisite is to develop the spirit and habit of Recollectedness. That is the portal to Prayer, a threshold on which we must pause before we enter into its mysteries. Is it not here that most of us have stumbled? We have rushed into the Temple only to discover how unprepared we are to dwell in its courts, to comprehend its magnificence and awefulness. What has been revealed about this portal? "Be still, and know that I am God." "In quietness and con-

lence shall be your strength." God speaks in the voice of illness. If we are to pray, it must be with a body relaxed, with a quiet mind, with a heart stilled before the majesty of His Presence. In such a mood we are to begin the first overture of Prayer, and say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." When the soul learns truly to wait upon God, God attends upon the soul. That is the threshold of Prayer.

### *1. He reveals the true Nature of Prayer.*

We speak quickly of the Prayer-life, as though there were special field or department of our lives to be devoted to Prayer. The distinction must be made carefully between Prayer, which is a posture and disposition of the soul, and Prayers, which are particular actions and expressions of that underlying attitude. A soul whose desire towards God

is one of love and longing to serve, never ceases to pray. Prayers are the loving attitude made vocal. We should hesitate to speak of the special prayer-life of our Lord. His whole life was one of Prayer. In His own Person, Jesus reveals the pervasive nature of Prayer. If we seek for definition, we could say, with Christ as our living example, that Prayer is the moving of the whole will toward God; the utter determination to know Him better; the perpetual desire to love Him more truly.

When the Disciples, after days of intimate fellowship with Jesus asked Him how to pray, He gave them what we know affectionately as the Lord's Prayer. This divine gift is something more than an example of Prayer. It is a revelation of Christ's abiding attitude toward the Father. In the bestowal of this gift, our Lord shows us what must be the essential disposition of our lives, in terms of which alone we may learn to pray effectively.

Prayer is more than praying, more than asking, more than speaking. If the product of a right attitude toward God, it is sure to manifest itself in acts of adoration and thanks-

giving. That is what men call worship. The true suppliant proceeds then to confession of unworthiness, of love imperfect, of life still undisciplined. Then the soul in true humility pleads for others, in remembrance of them and intercession for them unceasingly. And finally it finds boldness to voice its own needs. Such manifold Prayer becomes truly vital and real, happily balanced and purposeful. Such was the Christ's own praying. We, as God's children, are learning from the Master to pray as Sons of God. We are taught by the example of His Son, our Lord.

### III. *He reveals the Triumph of Prayer.*

"More things are wrought by Prayer than this world dreams of." Christ would have us convinced that these words are true. Jesus teaches us to think of the Triumph of Prayer. "To pray is to labor", to work triumphantly. It is the hardest, the most difficult, work a man can undertake. Its problems are unending; and in no activity of our life is the discipline as severe and exacting. It is the battleground of the soul, wherein is fought the struggle of our whole existence. To win in Prayer is to triumph gloriously in all the higher reaches of our life; and to fail in Prayer is to know confusion and dissatisfaction everywhere.

What is the victory to be gained? Is it not to have revealed the knowledge that we belong entirely to God; that apart from Him we can do nothing with our life; that man is incomplete and incoherent as long as he trusts in his own strength. To labor and to strive to overcome every obstacle solely that we may live in perfect communion with God, that is the consummation of all desire which actuates the human heart. "Our hearts are restless, O God, until they rest in Thee." It is in Prayer that decision is reached. It is through Prayer that the victory of life is won. Lord, show us how to pray.

## PRAYER

And now, as our Saviour Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

“Our Father” etc.

Guided by his sacred Precepts we will endeavor:

1. To learn the art of Silence as the necessary preparation for Prayer.
2. To learn to pray in His Spirit, that the substance of our prayers may be fashioned by our life in Him.
3. To pray ever victoriously.

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*Friday*

MARCH 8

FASTING

**I**N THE GOSPEL APPOINTED FOR THESE EARLIEST DAYS OF Lent, the Revealing Christ tells me how to fast. He seems to assume that any sensible man *will* fast, as a matter of course. He tells me so to fast that I may realize that my treasure is in heaven, not of such stuff as may be stored on earth. The Revealing Christ shows me clearly that the secret of life is *not* to be found in terms of the flesh. During Lent, then, I am by systematic abstinence to put my body in its proper place, and fix my attention on those things of the spirit wherein meaning lies.

Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors gave to discipline of the body the name "fasting." "A fast" means "that which makes fast," "that which fastens." The object of cutting down my food in Lent and otherwise curbing natural carnal appetite is not to hurt the body or to punish it as an evil thing, but rather so to unfasten myself from bodily servitude that I may the more effectively lay fast hold upon spiritual reality.

"Ho, body, art thou so imperious in thy appetites?" I ask. "Have I so pampered thee that thou dost cry out at a Lenten privation? And dost thou threaten me if I continue not to give thee soft delights? I am no slave of thine. Thou mayest be to me a good servant, but thou dost make an evil master. Know thy place, O goodly body formed of dust." And then I say to my soul: "Dear soul, so long neglected, I turn my thought to thee, with shame. Thou art my true self. It was for thee that the good Jesus was crucified. Thee, O my soul, God put into this body made of ash. *Thou* wast not made

for death. Yet have I long forgotten thee, starved thee, abused thee. Body hath been greedy of my care, and I have too long heeded his clamor. But, O my soul, I shall this Lent curb Body's importunity. The slave must be a slave. It is to thee, beloved soul, that I have turned." And to my God I say, "Dear Jesus, lover of my soul, who by Holy Church hast called me from concern for that which ends in death, throughout this Lent help me to fast myself to this good soul of mine, that I may come at last to Eastertide."

What is my fasting discipline to be? I myself know, better than any other can, in what particular ways my servant body needs a sound reproof. My rule of discipline I make, then, for myself. God give me strength to keep that rule once I have made it!

But let me not forget that fasting must not be merely negative. By all my discipline, I must be *fastening* myself to certain spiritual reality. What are those things eternal, in terms of which that which is immortal may live and grow in me?

*First, by every abstinence, I will fasten myself to Truth.* I will try to understand those forces which move men and women, those circumstances which surround our lives. That means more than learning a new fact or two. The truth is the *meaning* of the facts. Truth and the search for it shall enrich my soul. To touch the hem of Truth's garment, even to catch a glimpse of her hurrying by in the distance, is to be forever a little more of a man.

*Second, I will fasten myself to Beauty.* I will do all that I have to do as beautifully as possible. It is not enough to look on beauty. No one knows what beauty really is until he has at least tried to create it. I cannot make masterpieces in stone or paint; I cannot command sound, or carve out lyrics which shall move men's hearts: but what I have to do, I may do beautifully. And every time I do it—though my creation be no more than a well-turned phrase or an act of kindness

or a silence when silence is fit—there is for me a contact with Reality.

*Third, I will fasten myself to Love—not Love as an animal greed, but Love born of compassionate desire to give that some one else may have, to suffer that some one else may be happy, to die that some one else may live; Love which embraces all men and women and children that there be, and all the cattle too. This Love which is truly love may be mine, but only in so far as I come to be content to love without demand of love. In it is treasure for the inner soul of which no man may rob me.*

*Fourth and finally, let me sum up Truth and Beauty and Love in one single Unity. Let me this Lent adore the God who is all three, and more. He is the Truth—the meaning behind the facts; He is the supreme Artist, maker of Beauty, sustainer of them who would create it; He is the master Lover, whom to love is to find all other loves exalted in the love of Him. Let me find Him in the silence of praying and as I kneel in adoration when the priest lifts high the ever-pleading Sacrifice.*

“Remember, O man, that dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return.” That is Ash Wednesday. “He who eateth Me shall never die.” That is Easter. And between the two lie forty days of *fasting*.

#### PRAYER

Assist me, Jesus, Thou Son of God and King of men, in this my Lenten fasting. Remove from me enslavement to my body, that I may with freedom seek and serve Thee all my days on earth. Take from my abstinence self-centeredness, vanity, and desire for singularity—that by its aid I may come to know Thee better and to love Thee more.

Be favorable, O Lord, to Thy people who turn to Thee in weeping, fasting and praying. Turn Thou us, and so shall we be turned.

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy Godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honor and glory whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we worship and adore, world without end.

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Saturday

MARCH 9

A L M S G I V I N G

READINGS: St. Luke 12:15; Acts 20:33-35; St. Matthew 16:24-27; I Corinthians 4:1-2.

IT REQUIRES A RATHER COMPLETE ORIENTATION AWAY FROM the world's standards for one to feel the impact of the paradoxes of Jesus. Our pragmatic age would smile at the thought of literal obedience to these challenges if it did not know of the accomplishments of a Gandhi and a Kagawa. One must risk his life in order to save it. This is not only a counsel of perfection; it is a simple, practical guide for mountain-climbers and other adventurers. They know that safety frequently involves their stepping courageously within an inch of death. Christians are to know that, too.

So also with that alluring paradox which slipped into the record almost by inadvertence. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Happiness, the Master insists, is discovered and achieved by the exercise of the giving impulse. Surely one great purpose of the Incarnation is to offer to mankind a portrait, a demonstration of the Invisible God, a God of Infinite Love; of love which shows itself in giving, in cheerful self-sacrifice.

"Liberality," the generous sharing with others of one's self, one's possessions, one's service, is the modern equivalent for the Biblical "almsgiving." This gracious virtue cannot flower in an atmosphere of calculation and expediency. The acknowledgment of God as Sovereign Lord of all things and of man's corresponding stewardship of those things which

man says are his own, is an axiom of the Christian morality. Thus a fair test of my loyalty to Christ and His Church is the dedication of my material possessions, as well as of my time and talents, for the establishment and stabilization of the Kingdom of God on earth. God gives us, in so far as we accept this trusteeship, the privilege of sharing in His life, His love, and His generosity. This sense of stewardship mediates between the mystical and the practical in religion. Pride of possession is superseded by the joy of ministration and we esteem ourselves rich only when we use, for the good of our brethren, that which we did not create and which has only been intrusted to our care.

One is interested only in that in which one makes investment: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is primarily concerned with the motive from which beneficent action springs. The religionists of His day accepted without objection the law of the tithe—one tenth of all income to God; but externalization had made pride the dominant motive of their apparent generosity. They wished to be seen of men. It contributed definitely to their sense of importance and it suggested to the undiscriminating the type of piety to which devotion should give rise. Jesus disclosed their condemnation, with a clear appraisal of life's legitimate compensations: "They have their reward."

He challenged the true believer to secrecy in his benefactions and benevolences, that man's approbation might not be the controlling dynamic of liberality. Today, by no means free from Jesus' stricture, we are in even greater peril, for we are prone to set as our standard not a tenth but an almost irreducible minimum, the common denominator of our corporate obligation and even to deny altogether the principle of proportionate dedication. Claimants far less worthy are preferred to those agencies which seek to establish Christ's Kingdom among men. To God, almost nothing!

Our age is restive under *any* invitation to self-denial. We talk more of self-expression, often forgetting that it is our *best* self which we must express; the mature stage of development, not the earliest; that which identifies man with God, not with the brute. The principle of self-denial which lifts man to his best, extends definitely to the use of money. Extravagance, when millions are in need; senseless luxury, when appeals for noble causes fail for lack of support; these belie the Christian name and motive. Profession without reality is shallow ostentation. The poor widow in the parable gave *all* that she had; the rich young ruler was challenged to sell *all* and follow Jesus.

Even in these trying days, we are apt to content ourselves with giving that which is sufficient to relieve us from self-reproach. In times when suffering and need are pathetically general, we Christians must be solemnly mindful of the privilege and obligation of sharing unostentatiously with those who are less fortunate. As did the Christ, we must identify ourselves with the under-privileged and, by a generous surrender of incomes and possessions for the service of others, live in the sunshine of the Master's approbation. So the Revealing Christ reveals. This is the sum of the whole matter: that passionate loyalty to Christ makes necessary no insistent appeal; the need alone creates a prompt and willing response. *If we love God, we shall give; if not, we shall not.* "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me."

Not what we give, but what we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare.  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,  
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me.

#### PRAYER

O Eternal God, who has committed unto us the swift and solemn trust of life, since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is

always present, Grant that we may give ourselves, with a ready will, to make Thy way known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Teach us, O Father, by Thine infinite love for us and for all men, to love those whom we have not seen but with whom we may share the good things Thou hast intrusted to us. Help us to pray instantly, to give liberally, and to work diligently, that the coming of Thy Kingdom may be hastened and that the sorrow of the world may be relieved, through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

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Give us, O God, the power to go on,  
To carry our share of the burden through to the end,  
To live all the years of our life  
Faithful to the highest we have seen,  
With no panderings to the second-best,  
No leniency to our lower selves,  
No looking backward,  
No cowardice.  
Give us the power to give ourselves,  
To break the bread of our lives unto starving humanity,  
In humble self-subjection to serve others,  
As thou, O God, dost serve thy world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Gailor.

<sup>2</sup> Prayers for an Indian college.

template. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways: God is indeed the Wholly Other. There is no path from man to God, but there is a path from God to man; man by searching cannot find God, but the God of grace and mercy can reveal Himself to man. He has revealed Himself. In the Revealing Christ He has opened the new and living way.

There was a time when England was called Merrie England. Some of the old carols which come down to us from that time still retain an old-time radiance of Christian mirth.

God rest you merry, gentlemen;  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born on Christmas Day,  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray.

There is reason for the merriment. The mirth, the innocent laughter, the naïve and inexpressible happiness of these old Christmas carols were based upon the coming into this world of Jesus, the revelation of God. An English vicar has said that the Incarnation restored laughter to the world. Reduced to its simplest terms, the Christian religion is the humble, loving, blithe acceptance of a "given" thing, the grace of God in Jesus, who is Himself God's Word. That Word reveals God to us. His work makes effective the revelation. In the Christ, eternity enters our temporal order and redeems it; in the Christ, reality confronts us in an amazing fullness; in the Christ, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He dwells with them in power and love forever. This is the message of the Revealing Christ; and when it is heard it becomes for us, as it did for Ludwig von Beethoven, a veritable Hymn of Joy, of joy that has laid hold on something wholly true and good and beautiful, something enshrined at the heart of things, and does not let go of that most dear possession.

always present, Grant that we may give ourselves, with a ready will, to make Thy way known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Teach us, O Father, by Thine infinite love for us and for all men, to love those whom we have not seen but with whom we may share the good things Thou hast intrusted to us. Help us to pray instantly, to give liberally, and to work diligently, that the coming of Thy Kingdom may be hastened and that the sorrow of the world may be relieved, through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

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To carry our share of the burden through to the end,  
To live all the years of our life  
Faithful to the highest we have seen,  
With no panderings to the second-best,  
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Give us the power to give ourselves,  
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As thou, O God, dost serve thy world.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Prayers for an Indian college.

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FIRST WEEK

*THE NEED OF  
THE REVEALING CHRIST*

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*Monday*

MARCH 11

WE NEED THE REVEALING CHRIST  
TO SHOW US THE FATHER

ONE OFTEN HEARS IT SAID THAT IT DOES NOT MUCH matter what theology a man holds if his character is upright and his attitude towards his fellow men benevolent. That is not true. It matters greatly what theology a man holds, because upon it depends the quality of his faith, and faith is the creative element in human life.

Take, as an instance of this, what is called natural theology. Natural theology, as the name implies, takes the material for its conception of God from the revelation that is found in nature. That revelation does not go far enough to form the basis of an optimistic creed. It reveals the *power* of God abundantly; it does not reveal His *goodness*. It gives no certain indication of His love. Nature is capricious in its dealings with us. With one hand it uplifts; with the other it casts down. The early and the later rain are of nature's bestowing; but so are the cyclone, the earthquake, and the

avalanche, the floods that drive men from their homes and the droughts that blight their harvests. More is to be known of God through human nature, with all its faults and limitations, than from external nature in all its plenitude of power. The good Samaritan stooping over the victim on the highway, the father welcoming the prodigal, running forth to meet him and embrace him with forgiveness, tell us more of God than can be learned from the midday sun, shining in its strength, or from the solemn procession of the stars across the Syrian sky.

Take as another example of inadequacy the speculative theology, very popular at the present time, which identifies God with the processes of creation and consequently believes Him limited in power. According to theologians of this school, the evolution of the world is the record of the endeavor of a life-principle or force to express itself and thus to work out the inherent destinies of its being. They tell us that God has never at any time from the beginning been master of Himself or of His problem; that He has never been able to do the things which He has wanted to do. "He has never seen His purpose through to the end," says one author, "but has always been struggling, failing and beginning again, falling and rising again." A finite, struggling deity, well meaning but ineffective, is their substitute for the ineffable Name, the living God by whose firm will the fabric of the universe subsists. Such a theology underlies much of our modern pessimism and is the cause of many of the personal and social disasters which follow in the wake of pessimistic thought.

For a theology which can give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, the world must wait upon Jesus. There is no path from man to God. The abyss of difference is too broad for the mind of man to bridge, too awful for his heart to con-

template. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways: God is indeed the Wholly Other. There is no path from man to God, but there is a path from God to man; man by searching cannot find God, but the God of grace and mercy can reveal Himself to man. He has revealed Himself. In the Revealing Christ He has opened the new and living way.

There was a time when England was called Merrie England. Some of the old carols which come down to us from that time still retain an old-time radiance of Christian mirth.

God rest you merry, gentlemen;  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born on Christmas Day,  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray.

There is reason for the merriment. The mirth, the innocent laughter, the naïve and inexpressible happiness of these old Christmas carols were based upon the coming into this world of Jesus, the revelation of God. An English vicar has said that the Incarnation restored laughter to the world. Reduced to its simplest terms, the Christian religion is the humble, loving, blithe acceptance of a "given" thing, the grace of God in Jesus, who is Himself God's Word. That Word reveals God to us. His work makes effective the revelation. In the Christ, eternity enters our temporal order and redeems it; in the Christ, reality confronts us in an amazing fullness; in the Christ, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He dwells with them in power and love forever. This is the message of the Revealing Christ; and when it is heard it becomes for us, as it did for Ludwig von Beethoven, a veritable Hymn of Joy, of joy that has laid hold on something wholly true and good and beautiful, something enshrined at the heart of things, and does not let go of that most dear possession.

## PRAYER

Almighty and eternal God, whom no man hath seen or can see, we bless Thee that Thou hast been pleased to manifest Thyself unto us in Jesus Christ Thy Son. We praise Thee that in the fullness of time He came into this world and took upon Him our human nature, that He might reveal to us Thy love and bring us into fellowship with Thee. Thanks be unto Thee, O God, for Thine unspeakable gift. Grant, we beseech Thee, that, rejoicing in the remembrance of His holy coming, we may welcome Him in our hearts as our Saviour and Lord. May His Spirit dwell in our souls and rule in our lives. May we give ourselves to Him in gladness and gratitude, and show our desire to honor and serve Him in the willing service of our fellowmen. And may the glad tidings of Thy grace in Jesus, the Christ, be proclaimed throughout all the world, to the praise of Thy most holy Name.

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*Tuesday*

MARCH 12

WE NEED THE REVEALING CHRIST  
TO CONVINCE US OF SIN

**S**IN IS A WORD WHICH TAKES GOD INTO ACCOUNT. IT IS A word which takes us straight out of the worldliness in which man is the measure of all things into the other-worldliness where God is the measure of all things.

What has become of it nowadays? Where can one find a consciousness of sin? The very phrase sounds archaic, like music played upon a harpsichord. For all that, let us press the question. Are we so much better than our fathers, that words which they used freely and sincerely are no longer applicable to our moral condition, so that we cannot use them without indulging in cant? Or were they, after all, mistaken? Has "humanism" rather than revelation the final word to say? Is sin to be understood in some less reprehensible sense than of old; as a survival, perhaps, of man's animal inheritance, or as his reaction to unfavorable conditions; blameworthy, no doubt, but quite explicable, and nothing to worry about?

We cannot account for the change on the ground of moral superiority. When we think of the men and women who were the pioneers in our American colonies, when we remember the hardships they endured for conscience' sake, their devotion to duty, their care for the upbringing of their children, the earnestness of their prayers, the discipline of their lives, we realize that, whatever else may account for the transition in thought, our moral superiority is not a

factor. We are not better than our fathers. We are better informed about many things than they were; we are more genial, we are more adaptable, no doubt we are much more tolerant. But in other respects there has been no improvement, and in some respects there has been retrogression. As one looks deeper, one discovers that the sense of moral unworthiness is never a symptom of extraordinary badness. Extraordinary badness is callous. Thoroughly bad people are not troubled by sensitive consciences. The theft of an apple troubled St. Augustine more than the murder of his wife and mother troubled Nero. A troubled conscience is an indication of moral vitality rather than the lack of it.

If we cannot account for the change on the basis of moral superiority, still less will the second alternative serve us. We dare not account for the change on the basis of a better understanding of the character of God. We dare not say that God is less concerned than we had supposed Him to be with the behavior of His creatures, or that disregard of Him is less deadening to men's higher faculties than it once was, or that disobedience to His laws is less likely to be coupled with devastating consequences than men believed in days gone by. Whenever our thought becomes serious, whenever it gets below the easy and conventional surface of life and man thinks in terms of laws and sequences and order, we are bound to concern ourselves with the tremendous fact of moral distinctions and the equally tremendous fact of moral retributions. The Greek tragedians saw the recoil of sin upon the transgressor and called it Nemesis. They showed that all tragedy which deserves the name is caused by the working out of some moral defect in an otherwise upright nature. The followers of Buddha saw it at work and called it Karma, the sum total of a man's deeds, their indelible consequences, indelible because wrought into the fiber of character itself. The sciences of our own day are pointing out that there is no need to look to the future alone

for vindication of the moral order. Psychology, one of the oldest and newest of the sciences, is corroborating at every turn the Christian doctrine of inwardness. Human law takes cognizance of the overt act; divine law is more concerned with the motive. Psychology follows the same course and shows how the broken law avenges itself in galling servitudes, in strange and obscure disintegrations, in the vulgarized mind, the hardened heart, the enfeebled will. Life is diminished by these penalties; its pleasures turn to dust and ashes.

Jesus came to convince the world of sin. His first message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repent means Change your mind. If we wish really to be Christians, we must change our minds. We dare no longer measure ourselves by the standards set by our neighbors, or by the conventions of the society in which we live. We are confronted by the absolute standards of Jesus. We are brought to judgment of thought and word and deed by the truth, the beauty, and the righteousness which are revealed in Him. The worldly-minded man does not see the necessity of this, because he accepts man's judgment; the Christian cannot escape it, because he accepts a different judgment. He measures his life, not by what men think of him, but by what Jesus requires of disciples. He is appalled by his shortcomings; he exclaims with the publican, "God be merciful to me!" But in that very confession of need the way is opened for the inflowing of the divine forgiveness; and after the drastic and cleansing purgation there comes the renewal of life.

#### PRAYER

We acknowledge, O Father and Judge of all men, that we have sinned against Thee; that notwithstanding we have been continued in the world from day to day, and Thy mercies have been borne to us on the wings of every hour,

we have been undutiful and unthankful. We have often forgotten and often disobeyed Thee. O Father, pardon and reclaim us; cleanse us from our secret faults, and let sin have no dominion over us. Enable us to become in all things true followers of Thy Son. Clothe us with His humility, purity, and love.

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Wednesday

MARCH 13

WE NEED THE REVEALING CHRIST  
TO TEACH US MAGNANIMITY

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT TWO SYMBOLS EXHAUST ALL POSSIBLE conceptions of the religious life, the symbol of money and the symbol of love. Jesus repudiated the symbol of money, of temporal rewards, of worldly prosperity, as a religious conception. When His disciples, lapsing into a lower level of thought, asked Him what they were to have as a reward for following Him, He promised them persecutions. When they inquired about possible crowns and kingdoms, He answered them in terms of the Cross.

There is no despising of natural good things to be found in the teachings of Jesus. He found no fault with men for desiring food and drink and clothing, health and length of days. The Father knew these their needs, and they could trust Him to provide for them. But health, wealth, happiness, and length of days were not the most important things. Devotion to God was the main thing. Disinterested love of God, disinterested loyalty to God, disinterested zeal for the Kingdom of God, were the things which stood first in the realm of values. So taught the Revealing Christ, and so He teaches still.

We need again to listen to these hard sayings of Christ. We need them as we need iron in the blood. There has been too much appeal to lower motives in the name of religion; too much telling men that honesty is the best policy, as though that were what mattered; too many books promul-

gating the doctrine that religion makes people prosperous; too much resort to religion, not for what it is in itself, but as a remedy for physical ills. Religion has therapeutic values, and we may well be grateful for them; but religion must never be regarded as a mere means, even to so good an end as health: it is itself the supreme good and the chief end. Let men and women love God because God is worthy of their love. Let them pray, not primarily for benefits or protection, but because prayer is communion with God and in this communion lies felicity. St. Augustine knew this and acknowledged it in his *Confessions*: "Too late I seek Thee, O my highest Good!" St. Francis of Assisi knew it, and the knowledge made him what he was. In Chesterton's words, it dominated his life from the moment when he went forth in his hair shirt into the winter woods to the moment when he desired even in his death agony to lie bare upon the ground, to prove that apart from God he had and was nothing. The Covenanters knew it when they declared that man's chief end is "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." If God is valued merely for His gifts and bounties, then religion is made subservient to self-interest; but if God is loved as Jesus loves, for God's own sake, then in time of persecution men do not fall away.

To the ease-loving heart the Revealing Christ brings the challenge of His magnanimity, the challenge of a love that knows no qualifications, a loyalty that knows no limitations, a love and loyalty that ask for no reward but that of opportunity for service.

What does religion mean to us? Why do we seek God? These are spirit-searching questions, but not unique to religion. Art asks the same single-mindedness that religion asks. In Paris, in London, in New York, in every great city, there are artists by the hundreds living in poverty, scorning to make their living by unworthy work, men and women whose unmercenary love of beauty and pursuit of it, through

music, sculpture, painting, poetry, is a true discipleship. Science evokes the same magnanimity. The prevailing spirit and atmosphere of modern science are of an austere devotion to truth, regardless of temporal reward. One remembers what Thomas Henry Huxley said upon the subject in a letter to his friend, Charles Kingsley: "Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before facts as a little child; be prepared to give up every preconceived notion; follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you will learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this."

So speaks art; so speaks science; so, above all, speaks religion, whenever religion is presented to men as the Revealing Christ presents it, in its simplicity, in its severity, not as one of the minor interests of life, not as a facile means to obtain worldly advantage or temporal security, as the supreme interest of the soul. When it is so presented men and women will listen now as readily as in the so-called "ages of faith." The Church is often afraid that it may ask too much of its members. Rather it should fear to ask too little. It loses the young in spirit, the generous and the eager, when it speaks soft words and summons to an easy discipleship. It holds them only in so far as it holds them to the magnanimity of Jesus. By the very greatness of His demands, it kindles their spirits into flame.

#### PRAYER<sup>1</sup>

In God my soul reposes,  
I live by God alone;  
All life revolves about Him.  
I cannot live without Him.  
He cannot me disown.

<sup>1</sup> From a poem by Gustav Theodor Fechner.

In God my soul reposes,  
He is Himself the key  
Of goodness, truth and beauty,  
Giving an end to duty,  
To thought its unity.

In God my soul reposes,  
The voyage will be short;  
Though storms from harbor sweep me,  
In quiet I will keep me,  
Homebound for Him, my Port.



Thursday

MARCH 14

WE NEED THE REVEALING CHRIST  
FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF CIRCUMSTANCE

THE PROBLEM COMMON TO ALL OF US IS A PROBLEM OF  
spiritual alchemy. We need to learn the secret of the transmutation of values. We need to change not the content of life, but the meaning of life's content. We need to turn what is commonplace and prosaic into what is beautiful and inspiring, purposeful and vital, significant and real. To learn the secret, we turn to the Revealing Christ.

Jesus transformed *poverty*. Silver and gold He had none. During His public ministry He lived like other Eastern teachers of religion, upon alms given by those whom He taught and helped and healed. The disciples and He had a common purse. Judas, the man of Kerioth, kept it, and sometimes stole from it. In His very poverty Jesus came close to the poor; to this day they feel that they have a peculiarly personal share in Him. And He went about blessing and providing, dispensing spiritual gifts of mercy and of service, like a king.

Jesus transformed *loneliness*. When He went out from His home and carpenter's bench, it was to homelessness. During the last days of His earthly life His nearest approach to a home was that of His friends, Lazarus and Martha and Mary, in Bethany. Home of His own He had none; to one who wished to follow Him He said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air their nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He made the countryside of Galilee

His home, and had His sanctuary in the hearts of those who loved Him.

Jesus transformed *suffering*. His early ministry was joyous; but later on, destiny led Him a dolorous way, to Gethsemane and Calvary, to agony and martyrdom. By the way He suffered He transformed human suffering, and tasted death for all men when He died. The very Cross, symbol of shame and ignominy and excruciating pain, sign of utter defeat and frustration, became through Him the symbol of conquest that we place on our banners, the sign of redemption that we place in our churches.

All this He did without withdrawing from the world. John the Baptist came "neither eating nor drinking"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, giving His blessing to the innocent festivities of life and to its innocent relationships, heightening the joy of them, intensifying satisfaction by subordinating them to the spirit. He accepted our common life, and blessed it by His acceptance. It is written that in the beginning God saw the world that He had made, and behold, it was very good. Except where sin has perverted its uses and coarsened and degraded its meaning, it is still forever good.

O world as God has made it, all is beauty;  
And knowing this is love, and love is duty,  
What further need be sought for, or declared?

To those whose eyes have been opened by the Revealing Christ, life is seen in terms of *high adventure*; and so seeing it, they bring to it the spirit best fitted to interpret it and to enter into true enjoyment of it. Life is not static, but dynamic; an experience, an adventuring of the spirit. There is no reason to fear poverty, there is no reason to dread loneliness, there is no reason to shrink from suffering, or even from death, if they be met upon these terms. We are here for a short time, but on a great adventure of the spirit. All about us lies the realm of romance, if our eyes are but

open to it. There is romance in the play between will and circumstance. Heredity and environment furnish conditions with or against which we can pit the incalculable force of personal purpose and volition. One can think of few things more inspiring than the sight of a man or woman surmounting circumstances, struggling with an inherited propensity to evil or with adverse and difficult environment and transcending these limitations, as Christians are called upon to do. To them everything that comes into their lives—every joy, every sorrow, every victory, and every defeat—may be converted into a means of progress for the growing soul. We are not brought into this world to be sheltered and coddled and made soft. Life has larger uses than our comfort. We are brought into this world by a God whose love is as clean and strong and bracing as His own great winds—brought into this world to grow strong by encountering and overcoming obstacles, to fit ourselves by life's disciplines for a life that is endless.

#### PRAYER

O God, we pray not for tranquillity, nor that our tribulations may cease; we pray for Thy Spirit and Thy love, that Thou wilt grant us strength and grace to overcome adversity. One thing we ask of Thee, our God—not to cease Thy work in our improvement. Let us tend towards Thee, no matter at what cost, and be fruitful in good works. Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give, and not to count the cost; to fight, and not to heed the wounds; to toil, and not to seek for rest; to labor, and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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*Friday*

MARCH 15

WE NEED THE REVEALING CHRIST  
IN WORK OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

**J**ESUS WROTE NO ECONOMIC TRACTS. HE LAID DOWN NO SOCIAL legislation. On one of the rare occasions when He was asked to arbitrate the matter of a disputed inheritance, He declined to do so. "Man," He replied, "who made Me a judge or a divider over you? Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Therein comes light from the Revealing Christ. We are to take heed and beware of covetousness. We are to realize that the values of life are not to be measured by the yardstick of material possessions. We are to take the spirit of Jesus into our social system and by that spirit redeem and renew and reconstruct it. We are to apply the mind of Christ to our problems. As He deals with us, so we should deal with one another, upon the basis not of the market-place, but of the family; upon the basis not of human merit, but of everlasting mercy. The standards of the market-place are man's standards of this for that—so many pennies for so many bricks; so much compensation for so much production; a day's wage for a day's work, or an hour's wage for an hour's work. If an hour's wage means starvation, we are sorry, but we cannot help it. The standards which Jesus applies are the standards of family life, the standards by which father deals with son, and brother with brother. The harsh rigidities of the market-place, the hard tests of production-

capacity, have no place in His vision of that regenerated society which belongs to the Kingdom of God. The reason is that the nature of that Kingdom is fellowship; the principle by which it is governed is sympathy; and its highest law is love.

If the sufferings of the past few years have taught us anything, they must have taught us that this heavenly wisdom promises us what the wisdom of the world, inhibited by our present social structure, has not given us. Worldly wisdom has given us unregulated competition. It has turned large sections of modern business into battlefields. It has embittered the relations between classes. It has made possible the present gruesome paradox of over-production coupled with under-distribution; starvation stalking the streets of cities whose warehouses are bursting with unutilized supplies. The present economic depression is, of course, immediately due to the war; but no reasonable person can doubt that in countless ways it has been aggravated by basic defects in our social system. The problem confronting us in our economic life is the problem of such reconstruction as will peaceably but speedily eliminate these defects.

We do not need an economic revolution, to make the necessary change, so much as we need a spiritual revolution. "What our people lack is neither material resources nor technical skill—these we have in superabundance—but a dedication to the common good, a courage and an unselfishness greater than are now manifest in American life." Our need is of a spiritual awakening which will make plain to us our brother's need and move us to find the way to meet it, neighbor dealing with neighbor not upon the principles of the hard and avaricious bargainer, but upon the principles of Jesus, the principles of family life, in a world grown now so large.

That spiritual awakening, when it comes, is to mean new things. It is to mean that subserving the welfare and supply-

ing the needs of persons are regarded as of more importance than the acquisition of wealth. It is to mean that there is insurance against sickness, accident, unemployment, and want in old age. It is to mean recognition of the right of all to opportunity for self-maintenance and a wider and more equitable distribution of wealth. In the matter of race relations, it will plainly mean the disappearance of racial prejudice and antagonism and the willing removal of racial discrimination from such cultural facilities as libraries, parks, and playgrounds. In our foreign relations, whether political or economic, again it is to mean that the spirit of the family takes the place of the hard bargains of the marketplace. It will mean a realization that the good of each is the good of all; that disaster to any part of the human family carries loss and injury to the whole; that civilization is an organic thing, a family affair; and that, in spite of national difference and racial diversity, we really are members one of another, members of that family for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men and to suffer death upon the Cross.

#### PRAYER

They that are ensnared and entangled in the extreme penury of things needful for the body cannot set their minds upon Thee, O Lord, as they ought to do; but when they are disappointed of the things which they so mightily desire, their hearts are cast down and quail from excess of grief. Have pity upon them, therefore, O merciful Father, and relieve their misery from Thine incredible riches, that by Thy removing of their urgent necessity they may rise up to Thee in mind. Thou, O Lord, providest enough for all men with Thy most liberal and bountiful hand; but whereas Thy gifts are, in respect of Thy goodness and favor, made free unto all men, we (through our haughtiness and covetousness and distrust) do make them private and peculiar.

Correct Thou the things which our iniquity hath put out of order; let Thy goodness supply that which our niggardliness hath plucked away. Give Thou meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty; comfort Thou the sorrowful; cheer Thou the dismayed; strengthen Thou the weak; deliver Thou them that are prisoners; and give Thou hope and courage to them that are out of heart.



*Saturday*

MARCH 16

WE NEED THE REVEALING CHRIST  
TO BRING US SALVATION

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT A HEALTHY organism is its power of recuperation. Secret and quite unconscious processes of repair are set up in it whenever it is subjected to injury. We go into the woods in the evening after a sultry summer day, a day that has parched the ground and depleted vitality. We become aware at once of a great hush and a great peace: soft winds coursing through the woods and bringing refreshment, dews condensing, a thousand agencies renewing the face of the earth and repairing the ravages of drought and heat under the healing cover of darkness. This is a picture of what is going on everywhere. It is what sleep does for us. It is what rest does. No philosophy of life is adequate and no approach to its special problems, such as those of pain and suffering, is valid, if it fails to take into account this fundamental system and force of healing, spread through the whole constitution of things.

What nature does for us on the physical plane, the Gospel of the Revealing Christ does on the spiritual plane. It introduces a *vis medicatrix naturae*, a system and force of healing, a new and quite incalculable element of therapy. It comes as a second and more precious seed-time, sowing deep in the plowed and harrowed furrows of the brain the seeds of a divine renewal. The history of nineteen hundred years stands evidence of the introduction of this new and mysterious power at work upon men's natures, changing them,

transforming them, conforming them to Christ. By it we see the sick made well, the weak made strong, the enslaved set free, those dead in trespasses and sins raised up to walk in newness of life. Whatever else our religion is, primarily it is a religion of redemption, an impartation of life-renewing power.

The Word of God brings salvation. At whatever point He touches our common life, He touches it to transform it, to renew it, to redeem it. He is forever releasing hidden energies, removing hidden inhibitions, setting captives free. He touches art: and literature is glorified, as the sunlight of His Gospel is reflected from the pages of Christian poets; painters find their loveliest and most tender themes; music comes into its own in the celestial harmonies of Palestrina and Vittoria, of Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms; architects build their cathedrals, sculptors adorn them. He touches science: and it goes forward with new faith and new reverence for truth to explore the world to which His coming has given ultimate worth and significance. He touches the springs of social life: and womanhood is reverenced, parenthood becomes sacred, children are cared for, there is succor for the friendless and the poor. He touches politics: and men begin to talk of world-wide brotherhood, and to lay the foundations of peace.

In Him is life, and the quality of life to be found in Him is His gift to His disciples. They in their turn become saviours, communicating to others that which they have received from Him. There is a sharp distinction between the word "saint" as it is used in the New Testament and the quite different meaning attached to it more recently. In the New Testament, the word did *not* denote, as it does now, a *superior moral goodness*. It denoted the possession of this quality of life which forever finds expression in creative goodness. The saints are not saints because they are good; they are good because they are saints, because, that is to

say, they have in them a new type of life, given to them in Christ. That is central. The Christian religion is more than a system of ethics. It is the impartation of life-renewing power; and this power is transmissible.

The one hope of a good future for humanity is that there may be a great revival of Christianity in its authentic form of creative goodness. It is the splendor of our times that they constitute one of the building eras of universal history. The future of the world for generations to come depends upon what men and women think and will and do today. This is a world where the future is not mechanically determined but everlasting in suspense, a world which men and women can alter by the forth-putting of their wills in accordance with the creative purposes of God. Shall we so bring our wills into agreement? Shall we Christians, praying for the coming of God's Kingdom, become instruments for the bringing in of that Kingdom, by opening our minds and hearts to the Revealing Christ? Salvation lies that way.

#### PRAYER

We thank Thee, O God, for the endless renewing of life. Thou that art never weary of setting us free from the bonds wherewith we have bound ourselves, make us to walk in this day without fear or any kind of bondage. Open our eyes to receive new light; open our ears to hear the voices calling to us to make the world new by the power of love. Enlarge our souls with a divine charity, that we may hope all things, endure all things, and become messengers of Thy healing mercy to the grievances and infirmities of men. Fit us for the task that is ours; and endue us with the spirit of that heavenly Kingdom which is to come in power, wherein all shall be brothers and all the people of God. Let Thy life be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life; for Thou art the Deliverer of us all, and the Raiser-up of us all; and to Thee we yield loving praise and high thanksgiving, world without end.

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SECOND WEEK

*THE FORESHADOWING OF  
THE REVEALING CHRIST*

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*Monday*

MARCH 18

THE FORESHADOWING

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTICE THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE beginning of the Gospel according to St. Matthew and the Gospel according to St. John. The first begins with the genealogy of Joseph, tracing his descent from Abraham; but the Gospel according to St. John begins like the Book of Genesis, with the words "In the beginning." And yet the authors of both these Gospels were trying to begin with the same thought. They both shared the same conviction, the conviction that Jesus was the fulfillment and climax of a long process in which God had used centuries of history to prepare the way for the Christ.

St. Matthew used a method that convinced his fellow-countrymen that Jesus was indeed the Messiah they had been led to expect. He appealed to the letter of the Old Testament. He appealed to his descent from David. He appealed to every reference he could find in history and psalm and prophet that seemed to foreshadow the particular incidents

in Jesus' life. Like a refrain, there runs through his story of Jesus' childhood and Jesus' death the recurring sentence, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel." "And thou, Bethlehem, land of Judah . . . out of thee shall come forth a governor." "Out of Egypt did I call my son." "He shall be called a Nazarene." "Behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . seated upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass." "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, and gave them for the potters' field." To us, to whom a sentence in the Bible must be interpreted in the light of its context, this method of seeing Christ foreshadowed in the prediction of events seems artificial; but it witnesses, nevertheless, to the impassioned conviction that the Christ was the fulfilment of Israel's history, of all that a people had glimpsed and believed, waited and suffered for, hoped and prayed for, for a thousand years; that their dreams and songs, their visions and prophecies, their very sins and struggles, foreshadowed this Saviour and this Christ.

St. John, writing to make Jesus credible to men nurtured beyond Palestine, sees the Christ foreshadowed in the very act with which the mighty literature of his people begins, in creation. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." The Word which became flesh and dwelt among us, whose glory we have beheld, was implicit and foreshadowed in Creation. "Without Him was not anything made that hath been made." He appeals to the nature of things. He appeals to the very process of life. He appeals to the necessity out of which has issued all life, all history, all the movement of which our lives are a part. He appeals to that in God which goes out in creation and which finds its inevitable climax in the person of Jesus the Christ, in whom we behold His will and His heart.

Some one has said that the New Testament is implied in the first five words of the Old, "In the beginning God created," because, whatever the unfathomable mystery of creation, at its heart is the will to express a self in things and forms and hearts. All of us have had those rare moments in a quiet garden, in spring-time, face to face with a sunset at sea, beneath the brilliance of a star-lit sky in winter, when there has rushed in upon us the sense of an impulse resident in all things to speak out its nature and essence to us; and we know what the psalmist meant when he wrote, "The heavens declare," "The firmament showeth," "Day after day uttereth speech." One can almost feel the yearning of God to utter Himself through His creation. It is this, which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, which uttereth itself in creation, in law, in history, in all the awful experiences of nations, which finds its issue and fulfilment in the Christ. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners uttered Himself unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

A great part of our lives is lived among and with and by manufactured things. They express, to be sure, some one's mind and inventiveness and purpose, but for the most part only at second or third hand. They come to us from distributors and middlemen and machines. That is why to keep human and to keep sane we need contact with things into which some one has directly put his very self, some bit of craftsmanship, a picture, a symphony; to feel the living presence and touch of creative life upon our lives. That is why we need outdoors and the touch of earth and woods and sky. That is why, as no age has ever needed Him, we need the daily companionship of Him who can say to us, for God Himself, "O heart I made, a heart beats here."

#### PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, the Brightness of faithful souls, fill the world with Thy glory, we pray Thee, and show

Thyself, by the radiance of Thy Light, to all the nations of the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

O Lord, who seest that all hearts are empty except Thou fill them, and all desires balked except they crave after Thee, give us light and grace to seek and find Thee, that we may be Thine and Thou mayest be ours forever;

Eternal God, who by Thy holy breath of power makest us a new creation for Thyself; we beseech Thee to preserve what Thou hast created, and consecrate what Thou hast cleansed, that by Thy grace we may be found in that form the thought of which ever dwells with Thee, and which Thou willest fulfilled in man.

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*Tuesday*

MARCH 19

PATIENCE

THE FORESHADOWING OF THE CHRIST EXTENDED OVER CENTURIES. The record of it which we have in the Old Testament covers a long period in the history of civilization. Whatever the Old Testament teaches us, it ought to teach us that God's self-revelation takes time, that it is a progressive process. "Whom will He teach knowledge?" asks Isaiah. "Whom will He make to understand the message? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts?" Can you make infants understand? And then he gives the patient method God had to pursue: "For it is precept upon precept, line upon line; here a little and there a little." "Jehovah began," writes Gerald Stanley Lee, "with what little children could understand, with telling them what He would give them if they would obey Him." God has to begin with what His children can understand. And to evoke understanding and response to the highest requires time and patience. Revelation has to wait for recognition. The task of awakening the sensibility and conscience, the needs and aspirations which demand Christ for their fulfillment, required the patient education of the centuries.

I once heard a geologist say that it was a matter of untold ages of earth's history before, by the creative miracle of God some bit of inanimate matter acquired sensitiveness; and then, after that, untold ages more until a greater miracle took place and there awoke in man a sensitiveness to things that are unseen, an awareness of the impact and reality of

ideals, a recognition of the compulsions of beauty and truth and right. Our Old Testament is really but one of the later chapters in that larger Bible which includes all history. It is the significant chapter which tells us how the patience of God dealt with a nation called out of primitive conditions and slavery until finally God evoked from that nation's soul the cry, "My heart is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God."

However we read the record of a great nation's experience in the Old Testament, we ought to read from it a new understanding of the infinite patience of God with His children. He began with a people whose very thought of God was the thought of barbarous and merciless power. In the name of that power the prophet of God bids Saul "go and smite the Amalekite," saying, "Spare not, but slay both men and women, infant and suckling." He brought them at last to a height of understanding where they saw God as One "full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering and of great goodness," who "like a Father pitith his own children." "Such treasures," writes Robertson-Smith, "are not won without struggle. What is easily appropriated is easily lost; and the abiding possessions of humanity consist of truths that have been learned by laborious experience. It was not enough that God should declare His will and love to man. The declaration required to be incorporated with the daily lessons of ordinary life, to be woven into the personal experience of humanity."

It took fifteen centuries for Israel to begin to understand. It took the infinite patience of God. And we have in this a foreshadowing of the infinite patience of One who, with but a few short years to live, with a passion burning at His heart to make His people see and understand the things that belonged unto their peace, yet never hurried and never lost the serenity of a perfect trust. He had to encounter what the

creative love of God has to encounter before a clod can bring forth a face with eye upturned to heaven. He had to wait for and almost despair of understanding. "Having eyes, see ye not; having ears, hear ye not? How is it that ye understand not?" He asks it again and again. And yet misunderstood, betrayed, denied, forsaken and crucified, the calm patience of His faith in the power of His truth has never broken.

We happen to live in a day when every man knows that somehow the world needs reordering. We are impatient for a new day. Some of us would shatter into bits the whole sorry scheme of things in order to remold it. All the former implements of civilization are being questioned; democracy, private property, and religion are being questioned. Some of us would have recourse to miracles—miracles of legislation and planning and organization and distribution. Some of us in despair would resort to the quick, decisive solutions which force and autocracy offer. Few of us have the patience to trust to the slow awakening of understanding and conscience among ordinary men. Few of us have the patience to keep believing in the power of unselfish living, of duties rightly done, of industry and faith, of courage, and of a clean heart; in the power of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of knowledge and true godliness, through which God slowly builds His Kingdom upon earth. All of us have need of the patience of One able to die for a cause which only twelve ordinary men had come to understand, the patience of the Eternal God with whom a thousand years are but as yesterday.

#### PRAYER

O God, by whose command the order of all time runs its course, forgive the impatience of our unbelief; and, while we tarry Thy fulfillment of the ancient promises, makes us

to have a good hope because of Thy word; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, our Light in darkness, our Strength in weakness, our Hope in sinfulness, and our eternal Home, be unto us merciful, long-suffering, and patient; that we, who are slow of growth, may hope at last to come to Thy likeness; and, being upheld by Thee, may by Thy mercy go from strength to strength, until through the waste and dreariness, through the joy and duty of this earthly life having safely passed, we by the fullness of Thy mercy may come into the land of eternal peace.



*Wednesday*

MARCH 20

PERSONALITY

**B**Y AND LARGE, THE OLD TESTAMENT IS THE STORY OF A people meeting a Person. It is the story of Israel encountering Jehovah.

It was His personal character which distinguished Jehovah from the deities whom Israel's neighbors worshiped. Moloch and Chemosh, Dagon and the Baalim of Palestine, were indeed personified by their worshipers; but they were only reflections of the attributes and characteristics of their worshipers. They did not possess a definite will and character of their own. They were not different from or above their people. But in the Old Testament we see a people encountering a will and a fixed purpose, a Personality, rising far above their purposes and desires. The Ten Commandments were the declaration of a will demanding from that people the abandonment of their natural inclinations. Their lust and selfishness, their brutality and covetousness, were countered by a holy and inflexible will, saying unto them, "Thou shalt not!" Their attempt to satisfy the demands of their God or to secure His favor by gifts and sacrifices were confronted by the ceaseless demand for something harder and something higher. "Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil?" ask His messengers. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." Israel rebelled and sought to escape the requirements of an exacting

relationship. Micah the prophet summarized the process in a sentence—"Jehovah hath a controversy with His people."

There has been an attempt in our time to explain away God as being merely the embodiment of our own wishes and fears, claiming that it is we who have created God after our own image. But the witness of our own personal experience bears out the tremendous witness of Israel's experience. The idea of God arises in our consciousness as we gradually discover in life the presence of reality outside ourselves that is greater than our inclinations. We encounter the inevitable reality of something in life that exists and has its way regardless of our preference and our choice. We are really beginning to learn the presence of God in life when, as babies learning to walk, we fall and bump into something that does not yield. Step by step we come to find ourselves encompassed and limited by realities we did not make and do not choose. We grow old and die in spite of our wishes. We cannot by taking thought add one cubit unto the measure of our stature or turn one hair white or black. The resistless tides of time and birth and love and relationship and work and death sweep us forward on their bosom, whether we will or no.

This earth, this vale where'on we move and dream,  
Is on all sides o'ershadowed by the high, stern mountains of necessity,  
Sparing us narrower margin than we deem.

If it were left to our own wishes and inclination this world would be a softer place than it is and God an easier God. The soul of Israel, passing through the splendid tragedy of human experience, once and forever made the discovery, through the centuries, that the high, stern necessities that confront our living are not blind; that the insistent pressure upon our lives of a Reality that will not yield in its demands is the pressure of a Hand seeking to lead us up the steep ascent of the mountain of the Lord. In the days when the Ark of God led the hosts of Israel to the conquests

that Israel desired, in the splendid days of David and the gorgeous days of Solomon, a belief in God may have been easy and natural. But when the land was rent by civil strife; when first despotism and then anarchy reared their ugly heads; when the gap between the great and small widened until justice was turned to wormwood; when the rod of the Assyrian had stripped the land of its all and turned Jerusalem into a heap of ashes; when a pitiful remnant of deported exiles sat by the waters of Babylon and wept as they remembered their distant land; when poverty and oppression were all that rewarded their desperate attempt to return and build again—they yet found for themselves and for humanity the assurance of the Living God. “Though He slay me, yet will I put my trust in Him.” “The plowers have plowed upon my back and made long furrows: yet art Thou righteous, O Jehovah.”

They found a righteousness which insisted upon their righteousness. They found a purpose which would not let them go. They found a nature and a character, a heart which they could trust. They found the features of a Face whose full meaning and beauty became visible in Him to whom we apply the words of their insight, won at so great a price: “In all their afflictions He was afflicted; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old.”

#### PRAYER

Reveal to us, we pray Thee, O Lord our God, the vision of a purposeful universe; and restore to us, by communion with the Eternal, the significance and worth of the passing days. Thou hast made us for Thyself; and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee. From the wanderings of our desires, and the perversity of our passions, lift us into the higher air of tranquil and self-forgetting dedication to Thy will.

Prolong and clarify for us, we pray Thee, our glimpses of reality; and enable us by resolution and by habit to find ourselves in Thy presence. Detach our minds from the incidental and fix them on the Eternal, that, though we know but in part, we may know that we are known.



*Thursday*

MARCH 21

TRANSCENDENCE

SOMETHING INFINITE AND ETERNAL ABOVE US. CARLYLE, IN that great address of his to the students of Edinburgh, said: "No nation that did not contemplate this wonderful universe with an awe-stricken and reverential feeling that there was a great unknown and all-wise, all-virtuous Being superintending all men in it and all interests in it; no nation ever came to be very much, nor did any man, either, who forgot that." It is the imperishable gift of Israel to humanity that civilization can never forget the thought that there is One, Holy, Eternal God who is above all and in all and through all. The Old Testament is made up of very many different books of different character and different purpose. But all these books share one common consciousness—the conviction of The Eternal above the ebb and flow of the tides of earth's history. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." "It is He that sitteth above the circle of the earth, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain." "The Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." "The everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding."

The reach and sublimity of this vision shines out, above all, in the utterances of Israel's prophets as their insight was cleansed and raised by the fearful crises through which they sought to guide a people trampled under the march of contending empires. "Our civilization," says Alfred Whitehead, "owed more to the Hebrew prophets, more than we can

express. They constitute one of the few groups of men who decisively altered human history." The prophets saw the righteousness of God extending far beyond the bounds and above the fortunes of Israel. They framed for Him the name "The Lord of Zebaoth," the Lord of Hosts, the God of all power and might in heaven and earth. The clear and austere vision of a God of righteousness and justice, transcending all limits of land and race and time, is the deathless gift of the Old Testament to the course of human history.

Does this mighty and exalted vision foreshadow the Christ? It is only yesterday that the Church has recovered a sense of what some one has called "the dear humanity of the Christ." It has been good to recover the figure of the Carpenter of Nazareth, speaking the language of His neighbors, taking children into His arms, interested in the daily round of life, using words that are simple and familiar, speaking of the things men see about them, the fields and the sowing, the nets and the fishing, the figure of One who, being wearied, sat by the well to rest, the friend of common and disreputable people, treading the path His fellows trod. There is no doubt that this recovery was needed to save Jesus from becoming a remote and unreal theological figure. But we are in danger today of losing the truth that somehow His words always took men beyond the thought of house and field, bread and home, neighbor and kinsman. We need to recover what the best of the spirits of His day immediately felt; to perceive that He saw something they did not see, that there was about Him that which transcended Galilee and Jerusalem, that, as He said of Himself "I am not of this world." In His calm transcendence of the Law when He said: "It hath been said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you"; in His unearthly poise when facing the judges who represented all earthly authority; in the whole texture of His character and the infinite quality of His outlook,

there is that which transcends humanity and verifies the saying, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

The real creed of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in their revolt against monarchies, autocracies, and the embodied authority of tradition, was belief in man; man's right to life, liberty, and happiness; man's ability by his intelligence and will to remake the world and make his own fortune; man's dignity and limitless possibilities; man's liberty to be what he chose. No lines appealed more to the sentiments of the creed of these centuries than the lines of Henley, "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." "Religion," writes Dr. Sperry, in an incisive analysis of the liberalism of the last two centuries, "may be in danger of dying today for the reason that we have made it too much our own affair. . . . In the name of religion and for the sake of religion we must turn and face the universe, because we have traffic with it, whether we like it or not. . . . It took our liberal forefathers a century to learn to say 'man' plainly and fully. It may well take our time quite as long to learn again how to say 'God.' . . . What matters is that we should know that this is the one word above all others which any religion must utter and that we should be trying to learn how to say it."

To grow and to be free our souls need something more than ourselves. We need a transcendent object of devotion. We need something infinite and eternal above us, one God, one Lord, in whose service is perfect freedom.

#### PRAYER

O Thou God Omnipotent, who so carest fr every one of us as if Thou carest for him alone, and so for all as if all were but one, blessed is the man who loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee. For only he loses none dear to him to whom all are dear in Him who cannot

be lost. And who is that but our God, the God that made heaven and earth, and filleth them even by creating them. And Thy law is truth and Thy truth is Thyself. I behold how some things pass away that others may replace them; but Thou dost never depart, O God, my Father supremely good, Beauty of all things beautiful. To Thee will I intrust whatsoever I have received of Thee and so shall I lose nothing. Thou madest me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it repose in Thee.

With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying:

“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory; Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.”

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*Friday*

MARCH 22

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

THE JEWS CLASSIFIED THEIR SACRED BOOKS INTO THREE GREAT divisions: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. They recognized a difference in nature between them. One of the great contributions of the Old Testament to our understanding of life and of religion and of the Christ, is the fact that it presents us a revelation wrought out through the interplay of different and seemingly opposite attitudes. Dr. A. V. G. Allen has a pregnant sentence in his essay on Religious Progress in which he speaks of "antagonisms whose blending in organic relationship by the mysterious power of life will lead us into the fuller truth for which we wait." Some one has remarked that every word in our language which stands for an elemental force or fact in life has its opposite: day and night; life and death; great and small. It is a striking thing to read over the sayings of Jesus with this in mind and to notice His constant use of these antitheses: "He that loseth his life shall find it"; "The first shall be last"; "Ask and ye shall receive"; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." The movement of life, the furtherance of truth, depend, one might almost say, upon a conflict of opposing forces and emphases. In the Old Testament we see foreshadowed on a mighty scale the movement of a conflict which has its climax in the cross of Jesus and which persists with every advance of life. The Bible will always be a living book because it is not one-sided and consistent, because it reflects the interplay of the mighty forces through which God furthers life. Again and again, in dramatic pictures, it

shows us the priest and the Law confronted by the prophet and his vision. Amos, the prophet, forces his way through the crowds gathered for the autumn festival and sacrifice at the shrine of Bethel and predicts the destruction of God's own people. "I hate, I despise your feasts, saith the Lord. Yea though ye offer Me your burnt-offerings I will not accept them. But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream." And Amaziah, the priest, answers, "O thou seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah and prophesy there; but prophesy not again at Bethel; for it is the King's chapel."

The Law was the foundation of national life. It was the order on which the stability of the nation rested. It meant the cohesion and the organization of the State and of the Church. On its basis rested the authority which held life together. It was the power that gave tradition and sacred custom their sanctity. Patient and devoted men guarded it, taught it, interpreted it, applied it, and thereby built those institutions under whose shelter men dwelt secure.

The prophet was a soul who dwelt apart, a listener and a seer, sensitive to the immediate voice of a present God speaking through the needs and emergencies of a new day, inspired with insight into the movement of life before his eyes, hearing the voice of the Lord God, seeing the vision of God's purpose for the future, reckless of consequences to the customs of the past and to the established forms of life. God gave the Law, God sent the prophets when the custom of the letter threatened to corrupt a people. When the voice of the prophet ceased, God held and disciplined a people through the Law. The scribe built upon the sure foundations of experience and revelation in the sacred past; the prophet's eyes were faced toward a glowing future.

It was this interplay of contrasting forces which prepared the way for the Christ, for One whose understanding of life was as the wideness of God. It is written that in one of the

great moments of His earthly life His disciples saw Moses and Elijah, Law and Prophecy, talking with Him; and His face did shine as the sun. Jesus understood both. "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law"; and, almost in the same breath, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." Few of us can talk with both and understand. Some of us are impatient of custom, however sacred. Some of us are fearful of change, however inevitable. To some of us the foundations of life rest in order and stability. To some of us the hope of life beckons through new and untried ways. All of us must look for willingness in the Church of the Christ to embrace and understand contrasting views and opposite attitudes, that its life may reflect the fullness of life to whom both Moses and the prophets bear witness.

#### PRAYER

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; take away from us all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that as there is but one Body and one Spirit, the one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, who hast taught us to keep all Thy heavenly commandments by loving Thee and our neighbor; grant us the spirit of peace and grace, that we may both be devoted to Thee with our whole heart and united to one another with a pure will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



*Saturday*

MARCH 23

HOPE

THE EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL WITH GOD ISSUED IN AN IMPASIONED hope, the hope of the establishment of a kingdom through Messias. Some one has called Hope and Faith and Love "the unreasonable virtues." Faith, the assurance of things that cannot be seen; Love, that loves because it loves; Hope, that sings its song of dawn in the face of unending darkness. These are not explicable or logical, as are prudence and thrift and moderation; but they are the forces that impel life, that have driven men onward, since Abraham went out long ago from Ur, not knowing whither he went. Sir Frederick Watts has pictured hope as a blindfolded figure seated on the top of the world as it whirls through darkness, plucking music from the remaining strings of a half-broken harp. It is a good symbol of that intense and persistent virtue which drove Israel along its path of endurance and faith, in those later days when the Temple was ruined, its land was ruled by strangers, and its life as a state was suppressed. It was something burning in Israel's heart, sustaining her, this hope that hoped on in the face of all reason, in the face of the iron bonds forged by Persia and Greece and Rome.

That hope began to voice itself after the disruption of the kingdom of David—a hope that looked for a return of "the good old days" of unity and power. It gained depth under the ravages of the Assyrian, and often became that impassioned demand for vengeance which reverberates in the imprecatory psalms. Gradually it was purified into a patient

hope for justice. It cried out through the tremendous voice of Habakkuk: "Art not Thou from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One? Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on perverseness. . . . I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and I will look to see what He will speak with me. And Jehovah answered, The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth and shall not lie. Though it tarry, wait thou for it, because it will surely come." We see then a hope founded upon the character of God, upon an everlasting righteousness that could not look unmoved upon iniquity and injustice. It rested on the very nature of God. It widened until it became a hope not only for the vindication of Israel, but even more for the establishment through Israel of a rule of righteousness and peace for all mankind: "Nations shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Stripped of everything but its past, its God, and its soul, a little nation held to hope that it should yet lead the world into the ways of peace.

More and more clearly those who held this hope came to believe that only through a Person could the personal will and the purpose and the blessings of the Eternal God find entrance and place on earth. They came to look for a son of David, to restore the kingdom of David; they came to look for a Prince of Peace, to bind up the wounds inflicted by ages of strife; they came to look for One acquainted with the grief of His people, to restore the hearts of that people. This was the soul of hope, nourished by the purest and highest genius of Israel that guarded those who had come to feel the creative impulse of God, those who had come to perceive the meaning of His patience, those who bowed before the transcendent righteousness of His presence, those who had found in Him their Father and their sure Refuge.

Our world, too, is hoping for the coming of a new day, for the promised time when war shall be no more, when oppression, lust, and crime shall flee before the face of God.

All of us at least dimly recognize that only a great hope can save civilization from suicide. The problems that confront our day are at heart problems of relationship; problems that have been imposed upon our times by an increasing complexity of civilization which welds into one bundle of life all sorts and conditions of men. Our instant problems are the problems of relationship between nation and nation, between race and race, between class and class, between industry and industry, between man and man. It takes no prophet to see that the one hope of making these relationships fair and true is the power of a kind of life, a personal character, based upon an immediate relation to the Highest. No amount of redistribution of things, or territory, or wealth, or political power, can take the place of the reign in men's hearts of a way of life that is *absolute* because it is of God. There can be no peace until we all come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect manhood, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ.

#### PRAYER

O Lord, raise up, we pray thee, Thy power and come among us and with great might succor us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, Thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end.

O Lord our God, under the shadow of Thy wings, let us hope. Thou wilt support us, when little and to gray hairs. When our strength is of Thee, it is strength; when our own, it is feebleness. We return unto Thee, O Lord, that from weariness our souls may rise towards Thee, leaning on the things which Thou hast created, and passing on from them even to Thyself, who hast wonderfully made all; for with Thee is refreshment and peace.

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THIRD WEEK

THE CHARACTER OF  
THE REVEALING CHRIST

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Monday

MARCH 25

HIS HUMANITY

THE LUMINOUS AND BEAUTIFUL HUMANITY OF JESUS IS TOO rarely realized among the religious people of our day. Both those who believe that He was *only* a man and those who adore Him as *infinitely more* run the risk of falling into the same error, that of debasing the wondrous richness of His humanity; the former because of their straining effort to force Him into molds sufficient to contain the ordinary personages of history, the latter because their reverent devotion tends to invest His person in garments of unreality. In other words, many of us look upon an artificial, not the real, Christ, either because preconceived notions and familiar standards contract His personality into a rigidity which actually it never possessed, or because incautious idealization enlarges His image to the extent of blurring the sharpness of its outlines. The only safeguard against falling into one or other of these tempting extremes is a bold belief in His radiant and complete humanity.

In view of what the Gospels say, it seems incredible that any thoughtful person should find it difficult to believe in the humanness of Jesus. Consider, for example, that moving account in St. Luke (1:26-2:52) of the prenatal period, the birth, and the childhood of Jesus, especially when read with St. Matthew's narrative (1:18-2:23). Elements of an undoubtedly supernatural nature enter here, which must not be minimized in a just appraisal of the whole, yet which can be, and often are, so exclusively stressed that everything else is lost sight of. This is like becoming so enraptured with certain details of a great painting that one misses the theme and the meaning of the work considered in its entirety. The underlying truth, stripped of all elaboration, which gives substance to the stories of St. Luke and St. Matthew is the most exquisitely human fact of which we have knowledge, the birth and growth of a child. That amazing Child had to enter upon the stage of history like other children, through the gateway of physical birth. He required the same care accorded other infants. Had His Mother not fed Him, He would have starved. Had she not clothed Him, He would have died of exposure. Had blood-thirsty, superstitious Herod been able to lay his hands on Him, he would have cut His throat. Granted that such tragic eventualities are under the circumstances unthinkable, one must admit their theoretic possibility or else relegate Jesus to the status of a phantom.

His childhood was that of an astonishingly beautiful and alert but entirely human boy. His basic experiences were those of other boys; His training was that of His companions. He was ruled and directed by His Mother and foster-father. His education came through personal effort and study. At an early age, by reason of Joseph's death, new responsibilities were thrust upon Him, so exacting that they may have postponed by several years the opening of His public ministry. We know of His devotion to His Mother.

Doubtless He loved deeply patient, considerate Joseph; at least it is suggestive to recall what beautiful and sacred connotations the term "Father" always had for Him.

After the opening of His public ministry He was still fundamentally human. He could be hungry (St. Mark 11:12), thirsty (St. John 19:28), tired (St. Mark 4:38), amazed (St. Mark 14:33), discouraged (St. Mark 15:34), sorrowful (St. John 11:35), angry (St. Mark 3:5), exalted (St. Luke 10:18, 21). His eyes and His gestures were memorable for those who heard His speak (St. Luke 6:10, St. Mark 3:5). There were things He could not do (St. Mark 6:5). There were things He did not know (St. Mark 13:32). He was tempted (St. Matthew 4:1-11, St. Luke 22:28, Hebrews 4:15). He offered prayers which were not answered as He wished (St. Mark 14:36, St. Luke 22:47, 48). He was subject to the opposition which always besets the prophet. He was at last captured, bound, beaten, mocked, spit upon, crucified. Through it all, as has been suggested, there were supernatural elements; but as to the thoroughgoing humanity of His life there can be no question.

We are accustomed to think of ourselves as normally human and of Jesus as abnormal. Precisely the reverse is the case. We are abnormal, or rather, subnormal; but He has normal humanity. The only perfect specimen of humanity who has ever walked this earth is Jesus. Our humanity is marred, diluted, sin-scarred. His is the complete realization and fulfillment of all that God visioned in His creation. Jesus is the perfect expression of God's idea of man. He reveals man no less perfectly than He reveals God.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Read St. Matthew, chapter 2, noting particularly the human touches in the narrative. Is this essentially a credible account?
2. Thoughtfully consider: (a) Whether perfect humanity

necessarily involves or necessarily excludes actual sin. (b) Whether the humanity of Jesus carries helpful lessons for one conscious of many sins and discouraged by repeated failure.

#### PRAYER

O God, who from the beginning of Thy creation hast purposed the development of a glorious humanity, and who in Jesus Christ hast revealed the perfect embodiment of that purpose, behold with merciful compassion Thy children whose sins have marred Thy image in their souls. Give to us the self-knowledge which comes of unswerving sincerity, and the spiritual discontent which comes of lofty aspiration. Help us to see in the stainless humanity of Jesus the promise of a truer humanity in ourselves, and to be not disobedient to that heavenly vision. Enable us to live and labor that we, with all mankind, may come at last unto the measure of the stature of the human fullness of Christ. We ask it, O Heavenly Father, in the name of the perfect Man, Thy Son, our Saviour.

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Tuesday

MARCH 26

### HIS COURAGE

ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMIES OF THE HUMAN spirit is fear. Throughout the long march of man from his emergence until today he has been subject to it. Never has there been a time when fear has not been determining men's thought and conduct, or at least like a grim specter dogging their footsteps. If it be not conscience, it is ever something else that "does make cowards of us all."

The age in which Jesus lived was obsessed by its fears. In high places and in low, men's nerves were overwrought. Around every corner lurked something to be afraid of. Fear was one of the most stubborn obstacles which the teaching of Jesus had to surmount; and more than once His approach to those whom He would aid had to be prefaced by the words, "Fear not." He was powerless to help those who were unwilling to cast away that fear.

Likewise today, fear is a common obstacle to Jesus and His way of living. Our fear has not the same causes as that of the people in Jesus' day; but most of us are subject to its spell. We are afraid of accident, of germs, of losing our money, of unemployment, of hard work, of the criticisms and sneers of men, of ourselves, of death, and even more of life. But Jesus' word to the baffled hearts and muddled minds of our world, as to the men of old, is "Fear not." He is the cure for fear.

Jesus was sublimely courageous. There is an incident related by St. Luke (4:16-30) which illustrates His physical bravery. He had been reading and teaching in the synagogue

of His home town, Nazareth, when His fresh and modern application of familiar Scriptures so infuriated the traditionalists in the congregation that they mobbed Him, and would have thrown Him headlong from a near-by precipice had He not "passed through the midst of them" and gone His way. There was something in the force of His fearlessness which so overawed the infuriated crowd that they permitted a single unarmed man to face them down. Nor was this an isolated instance. In those days there was no such thing as the immunity of free speech for a popular teacher operating outside the great intellectual centers, so that more than once Jesus' life must have been endangered by the revolutionary and popularly disturbing things He said. Without personal bravery, such a ministry in such a time would have been impossible.

Again, in the night of His betrayal and trial, it is His calm and patient courage which has thrown around His figure an indescribable majesty.

Jesus' moral courage ranges all the way from that sense of personal rectitude which prompts a man always to be himself and tell the truth, to that towering conviction of possessing cosmic significance which enables one to defy the world and relate oneself directly to the mind and will of God. Only the *supremely* great are able to go so far; but in the case of Jesus it is taken for granted by all the Scripture writers.

Considered almost at random, the teachings of Jesus are unique among those of other religious leaders in their suggestion of boldness and moral daring. For example, the subject of His followers' attitude towards their enemies came before Him one day. "Treat them as they treat you," "forget them," "ignore them," "hate them," "try to forgive them," say the world's great moralists. But listen to Jesus. "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which

despitefully use you and persecute you" (St. Matthew 5:44). Or again, He is considering the subject of morality as it concerns speech. Others have exhorted us to guard the door of our lips, and extolled the virtues of reverence and of silence. But Jesus takes our breath away when He says, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment" (St. Matthew 12:36). And certainly no human teacher has been courageous enough to say with Jesus, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (St. John 10:10). The implication is that apart from Him men have never known what it means to live; that the golden ages of Greece and Rome, of Spain in the time of Cervantes, of France under Louis XIV, of England in the Elizabethan period, of Germany in the heyday of its philosophy, with its music and its literature, of modern America with its money, its machines, its comforts, and its worldly power, all alike without Christ represent life at far less than its best. Life must find its center and motive in the truth as He proclaimed and exemplified it. Either the one who dared to say that, was the victim of a deranged mentality, or He was the most morally courageous person human history has known.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Read St. Luke 19:28-48, and St. Mark 2:23-28, noting evidences in the first of Jesus' physical, and in the second of His moral, courage.
2. Thoughtfully consider: (a) Whether moral courage goes deeper than physical bravery. (b) What conditions in modern life particularly call for personal courage.

#### PRAYER

Almighty Father, grant that we Thy children may realize Thy presence so intimately that we may be delivered from the fear which warps our thought and paralyzes our action.

Make us courageous in the face of difficulty, danger, pain, and death. Enable us to move through the days of our life calm, hopeful, strong, and unafraid, so that neither now nor in time to come need our spirits be ashamed. Fill us, O God, with that love which forever casts out fear, through the merits of Him whose courage knew no limits or defeats, Jesus Christ, our Lord.



Wednesday

MARCH 27

✓ HIS SELF-MASTERY

HE THAT RULETH HIS SPIRIT IS BETTER THAN HE THAT taketh a city. So said the author of the sixteenth chapter of Proverbs. The saying suggests that the first and greatest battle of every man is with himself. It is true. Without self-mastery, personal ability is fickle and native strength of character self-destructive. A good engine must have a governor. Steam possesses working power only when confined within walls which are stronger than itself. Personality without self-control cannot be helpfully directed. Here we discover one of the secrets of the strength of Jesus' character. His personality was perfectly integrated. There was no lost motion in the play of His energies. His powers were focused, never diffused. There sat at the helm of His being an authority, ultimately to be identified with the will and character of God, which held Him true and steady, however terrific the gales of adversity, however resistless the currents and tides of circumstance. He was invariably *master of Himself*.

The fact appears everywhere in the story of His life; but it is perhaps best studied in connection with the account of His temptations. The temptations of Jesus were real; they were not mere play-acting. Indeed, no man ever felt the full fury of temptation like Jesus. Temptation does not need to exhaust its full force on you and me; but on Him it concentrated every atom of its malignant wrath. On the dizzy moral heights where He moved, as on the summit of Mount

Everest, the winds were bitter and relentless. But Him they could not budge.

When, during those memorable forty days and nights of fasting in the wilderness, He was tempted, mighty issues were at stake, and the strain on His moral resolution was exceedingly fierce. Yet had He not successfully fought those temptations, so deadly in the point of their attack, He could never have been the Saviour of the world, and His ministry would have died in its birth. The first temptation concerned His motives: should He use His powers for selfish and trivial reasons, or only in obedience to motives which were lofty and unimpeachable? The second temptation concerned His methods: should He prosecute His ministry by following the quick, easy, sensational ways of worldly wisdom, or by dedicating Himself to the slow, patient, individually costly methods by which God's will realizes itself in nature and history? The third temptation had to do with the detailed means by which He would seek to reach His objectives: should He now and then be content with something lower than His best, something short of ideal, something less brilliant than His life's chief dream? Should He ever be ready to take half a loaf when He could not have the whole; or should He nail His moral colors to the mast and, if need be, go down with the ship of His personal fortunes, forever unwilling to accept a moral mediocrity or compromise, even as means to an irreproachable end? Never were there such tests of a man's self-mastery (Matthew 4:1-10).

Nor was this the only occasion on which Jesus was tempted. His earthly career from beginning to end was filled with testing. To the sort of person He was, subtle refinements of temptation, lost on you and me, struck home with peculiar force. There was the temptation to overstress the miraculous; and He was constantly on His guard against it. There was the temptation, to which Judas later disastrously yielded, to force the hand of God by precipitating

a crisis in which He would have no choice but to intervene supernaturally. There was the temptation to set Himself up as a rival to John the Baptist. The besetting temptation of the teacher is to try to impart truth instead of inspiring his pupils to find it for themselves; of the preacher or evangelist always to be counting the crowds; of the orator to "turn himself loose" and tell his audience all he knows and feels; of the literary artist to become prolix; of the religious enthusiast to be bigoted; of the poet to become artificial; of the highly sensitive soul to drain the cup of each experience to its emotional dregs; of the great to be conceited; of the genius to be impatient of slower minds; of the idealist to be impractical. Jesus felt them all and vanquished them all. Within that amazing personality there were no complexes, internal antagonisms, or unbuttressed strains. His self-direction was perfect. His self-mastery was undisturbed. No "if," or "yet," or "mole," or "flaw" have nineteen centuries, with intense and often hostile scrutiny, been able to discover in the miracle of His self-control.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Read St. John 16:1-16, noting evidences of Jesus' self-restraint as a teacher.
2. Thoughtfully consider: (a) Which of two men best realizes the force and enormity of sin, he who yields to temptation or he who successfully withstands it? (b) The importance of self-restraint in all great achievement, for example in art.

#### PRAYER

Eternal God, to whom a thousand years are as a single day, whose patience is written large upon the face of all Thy works, give us such faith in Thee that we may attain to the self-mastery perfectly revealed in Jesus. Aid us to the persistence which does not look for quick results, the

moral resolution which is built on truth and right, the poise which comes of an undivided spirit. Amid the shallow unrealities of our day, set our hearts on values of infinite and precious worth. Master us, O God, that we may master ourselves for Thy service. We ask it in the name of the Lord and King of men, Jesus Christ, Thy Son.

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*Thursday*

MARCH 28

HIS INDEPENDENCE

THE TRULY GREAT ARE ALWAYS LONELY. THE QUALITIES which enter into the makeup of a man of genius are by their very nature such as tend to cut him off from the company of other men, to isolate him like a mountain peak towering above its fellows. Therefore, independence, the strength to bear loneliness and to stand by oneself, against all the world if need be, is an indispensable mark of great and original personality. Jesus possessed that sort of independence.

St. Mark, whose Gospel carries us nearer than the others to the events described, has not proceeded through one chapter of his story before he begins to tell of the effect produced by the independence of the Master. Jesus speaks with authority and not as the Scribes (1:22). He commands the unclean spirits with authority (1:27). His Gospel impresses His first hearers as strikingly original (1:27). Men flock to Him as to one who in their experience is unique (1:33, 37, 45). Indeed, the theme of that first chapter is the authority, the uniqueness, *the independence*, of Jesus.

St. Matthew bears the same testimony. It is likely that the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount represent a section lifted bodily out of the very early document known as the *Logia*, on which the Gospel of St. Matthew is largely based; and nowhere is the original independence of Jesus more strongly emphasized. In these chapters Jesus makes statements which, coming from a Jew speaking chiefly to Jews, are astounding to the last degree. He actually contrasts

Himself and Moses, to the disadvantage of Moses! "Moses said unto you . . . but I say unto you" is the refrain which beats through the music of His teaching. His words, He is scrupulous to point out, are not intended to destroy those of Moses; they rather fulfill them by removing their ultra-legalism and motivating them with a new spirit. Moses was a preparation for Jesus. Only a teacher possessing profound originality and the most exalted independence of spirit, whose position had more than mere eloquence to back it, could have made such a statement before that audience and lived to tell the tale.

The independence of Jesus appears also in His works. His miracles, which sometimes erect barriers in the religious road of modern people, were the most natural facts in the world to those who knew Him intimately. To them Jesus was so unique in His power and being that it would have seemed a miracle had He worked no miracles. Since they knew Him unique, they were not surprised when He did unique things. They did not approach Jesus through the miracles; they approached the miracles through Him. The miracles did not explain Jesus; He explained them.

Doubtless this is for us, too, the more sensible approach. If the miracles trouble us, let us for the time being forget them and cultivate the friendship of Jesus without them. Then, when through spiritual experience we have learned to know Him, we shall be able to approach even the miracles with more of understanding. Granted that it is often difficult to discover what in detail actually happened in connection with particular accounts, there can be *no question* that Jesus was as original and independent in what He did as He was in what He said.

The Gospel writers are constantly striking this note of His independence. He was born, yet His birth was in a class by itself. He was a sublime teacher, yet that sublimity possessed a quality never heard or seen before. He did works

which no other religious genius had dared to attempt. He was magnetic; but His magnetism was different. His great eyes flashed, His beautiful face shone, His sensitive hands possessed unutterable grace; but there was an unearthliness about Him. The death which came to Him was the same death which men had known and feared from the beginning; but there was an element of significance, yes, of hope, such as no other man's death had revealed. The Resurrection story is related calmly and with the utmost of simple dignity. Not even that stupendous miracle was out of character for Him.

Thus, forever, Jesus stands alone. When we would take His measure, all our yardsticks fail. He is independent. There have been many wonderfully great and noble men and women; but there is only one Jesus—the Master.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Read St. Matthew, Chapter 5, noting the independence of Jesus as a teacher.
2. Thoughtfully consider: (a) In science, art, literature, and economics we accent the credibility of the witness of



*Friday*

MARCH 29

#### HIS DEPENDENCE

THE INDEPENDENCE OF JESUS IS THE DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF His dependence. Although, as we have seen, Jesus was *sui generis*, possessing an originality of thought and character unprecedented among the personalities of history, yet, from another viewpoint, He was singularly dependent upon other persons, and upon sources of inspiration outside Himself. We observe in Him, as in ourselves and in others, evidence that where men seem to be standing alone there are in reality unseen influences and relations supporting them; that the man who visibly is most self-sufficient is invisibly most reliant upon foundations which he has not laid, upon forces for which he is in no sense responsible. It is, therefore, not an empty paradox, but sober truth to say that one is most independent at precisely those moments when he is most dependent.

To begin with, Jesus was not unrelated to historic humanity. Both St. Matthew and St. Luke picture Him as One the roots of whose human nature went down deep into the being of the race. On the human side He is to be explained, partly, at least, in terms of the nobilities, dreams, sufferings, and righteous lives, not only of the Hebrew people (St. Matthew 1), but of the whole of humanity (St. Luke 3:23-38). A vivid truth underlies those rather dreary genealogies at the beginning of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels, namely that every character in Jewish and human history who had aspired to be noble, true, and useful had helped, however infinitesimally, to make possible the birth

of the Saviour when at last the "fulness of the time" (Galatians 4:4) was come. The human nature of Jesus was in a measure dependent upon the striving and experience of the centuries that were past.

Again, the unfolding of Jesus' spiritual faculties owed much to the ideas and ideals of the Jewish Scriptures. Evidently, from early childhood He had read, memorized, pondered those sacred writings. They gave Him spiritual aid. The Messianic passages helped Him arrive at a complete consciousness of His person and destiny. The works and sufferings of the prophets buttressed His judgment of right and wrong. Old Testament thoughts suggested many of His most characteristic teachings. In each case, He made the familiar truth His own, fused it in the crucible of His genius, and gave it a point and power its authors had never sensed. He was above the Old Testament, not because He defied it but because His spiritual insight exhausted it and went beyond it. Here, as always, it was His vision and His obedience which gave Him His moral freedom.

He was beautifully dependent upon nature. The fields, the sky, and the flowers; the Lake of Galilee, blood-red at sunset, gleaming silver under the full moon, or whipped by a sudden squall; the habits of animals, birds, and fish; the miracle of the changing seasons—all had a fascination for Him. They colored His thoughts and words. Often He would withdraw from the world and depart into some quiet place. Certainly on these occasions He was accustomed to pray; but much of the time He must have been studying and communing with nature. The two are indeed not far apart. *Naturam vero amare orare est.*

He was dependent, too, upon His friendships. When the fickle crowds, discouraged by the note of sternness in His teaching, deserted Him, there is positive hunger in His question to the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" (St. John 6:67.) He calls them His friends, and dwells affectionately

upon the term (St. John 15:15). On the night before His death, He longs for companionship (St. Mark 14:32-42). Even on the Cross, we read between the lines, He derived comfort from the presence of His Mother and His friends.

His dependence upon God is attested by the place prayer occupied in His life. He rose up early and went out to pray (St. Mark 1:35). He spent the night in prayer (St. Luke 6:12). He prayed in the presence of the Apostles (St. Luke 11:1), and for them by name (St. Luke 22:32). In connection with great moral decisions He prayed as after the first successes of His ministry (St. Mark 1:35), before choosing the Twelve (St. Luke 6:12, 13), on the Mount of Transfiguration (St. Luke 9:29), in the Garden of Gethsemane (St. Mark 14:35), and at the Crucifixion (St. Luke 23:34). In fact, the implication runs through all the Gospels that it was prayer which most fed His spiritual life. It was as natural for Jesus to pray as for Him to eat and sleep; and at times He considered it far more necessary.

The last words Jesus spoke in the flesh were those of the Jewish child's bedtime prayer, which He may have learned at His Mother's knee, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (St. Luke 23:46).

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION



*Saturday*

MARCH 30

#### His Divinity

HERE ARE TWO APPROACHES TO THE SUBJECT OF CHRIST'S divinity, the way of the intellect and the way of the heart. The first lays chief stress upon logic and reason, the second upon religious experience. They who follow the first road say, "Show us why we should believe in the divinity of Jesus, and explain to us how such a doctrine can be true." They who take the other road say, "We shall find out for ourselves, practically and by actual trial, what sort of a person Jesus is." The point is not that one of these approaches is proper and the other unjustified. Each is legitimate and necessary. It is inevitable and right that men should seek intellectual reasonableness in their religious beliefs. Jesus Himself said we were to love God with *all our minds* as well as with all our souls. The problem is rather one of procedure. Must I be always explaining fact; or may I sometimes permit a fact to explain itself? This is the crux of the problems raised by the person of Jesus. Some feel that they *must explain* Him; but that is a perilously slippery road which not many can travel with safety. On the other hand, some would permit Jesus to *explain Himself*; and that would appear usually to be both safe and more sensible.

It was, in fact, the road followed by the Apostles. The first disciples had been attached to the person of John the Baptist, and had doubtless had their curiosity aroused by his somewhat cryptic remarks about Jesus. When later they became followers of Jesus, they were convinced that He was a remarkable teacher, that He possessed a strangely

of the Saviour when at last the “fulness of the time” (Galatians 4:4) was come. The human nature of Jesus was in a measure dependent upon the striving and experience of the centuries that were past.

Again, the unfolding of Jesus’ spiritual faculties owed much to the ideas and ideals of the Jewish Scriptures. Evidently, from early childhood He had read, memorized, pondered those sacred writings. They gave Him spiritual aid. The Messianic passages helped Him arrive at a complete consciousness of His person and destiny. The works and sufferings of the prophets buttressed His judgment of right and wrong. Old Testament thoughts suggested many of His most characteristic teachings. In each case, He made the familiar truth His own, fused it in the crucible of His genius, and gave it a point and power its authors had never sensed. He was above the Old Testament, not because He defied it but because His spiritual insight exhausted it and went beyond it. Here, as always, it was His vision and His obedience which gave Him His moral freedom.

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#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Read St. Matthew 13:1-23, noting how much is original with Jesus, and how much derived from outside sources.
2. Thoughtfully consider: (a) What justified Jesus in making so much depend on the coöperation of men? (b) Why did Jesus pray?

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, in whose personality self-reliance and humility were wondrously blended, teach us, Thy brethren, in this changing time that feverish activity is not enough. Without hampering the genius of our age for action, reveal to us

more and more the necessity of the quiet and receptive virtues of the soul. Enable us to achieve patience without indolence, humility without weakness, the open mind without faithlessness. Help us to balance trust in knowledge with belief in human destiny as Thou hast made it known. Save our independence from self-sufficiency and our dependence from fear, and grant to each of us that symmetry of character which the centuries have found in Thee. We ask it in Thy name and for Thy sake.



Saturday

MARCH 30

### HIS DIVINITY

THERE ARE TWO APPROACHES TO THE SUBJECT OF CHRIST'S divinity, the way of the intellect and the way of the heart. The first lays chief stress upon logic and reason, the second upon religious experience. They who follow the first road say, "Show us why we should believe in the divinity of Jesus, and explain to us how such a doctrine can be true." They who take the other road say, "We shall find out for ourselves, practically and by actual trial, what sort of a person Jesus is." The point is not that one of these approaches is proper and the other unjustified. Each is legitimate and necessary. It is inevitable and right that men should seek intellectual reasonableness in their religious beliefs. Jesus Himself said we were to love God with *all our minds* as well as with all our souls. The problem is rather one of procedure. Must I be always explaining fact; or may I sometimes permit a fact to explain itself? This is the crux of the problems raised by the person of Jesus. Some feel that they *must explain* Him; but that is a perilously slippery road which not many can travel with safety. On the other hand, some would permit Jesus to *explain Himself*; and that would appear usually to be both safe and more sensible.

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magnetic personality, had about Him an indefinable suggestion of high destiny, might possibly turn out to be the Jewish Messiah. But *that was as far as their first faith went.*

Their original impressions were more than justified in the days that followed. The new Master was for a while intensely popular. His works of healing created a sensation. Never had there been such a religious teacher in Galilee. That was only the facile enthusiasm which usually accompanies the beginnings of a movement. Soon opposition began to rear its head. The authorities took alarm. His words began to sound hard and mysterious, His predictions ominous. The crowds began to leave Him. Among the Twelve there must have been serious difference of opinion and much questioning.

At that moment Jesus changed His tactics. In large measure He gave up His public work at least as a main activity, and began to devote Himself more exclusively to the training of the Twelve. Then their consciousness of who He was began to deepen. More and more He impressed them, more and more He won them, until at Cæsarea Philippi (St. Matthew 16:13-20) Peter was ready to acknowledge Him not only as the Messiah, but as standing in unique personal relationship to God. A little later, on the Mount of Transfiguration, conviction entered a more final phase, when for the first time they saw Jesus, as it were, unveiled. As they looked upon Him that day, they suddenly felt that they were looking upon God, and that as they heard Him they were hearing God. In all the tradition of their people, only two individuals had had the ineffable experience of gazing directly upon God: Moses on Mount Sinai, and Elijah snatched to heaven in a chariot of fire. Thus they perceived themselves to be in the company of Moses and Elijah; and behold, in the ecstasy of vision, Moses and Elijah were with them, God Incarnate in their midst. Not always were they to be true to that glowing vision. Trial, disappointment, and

many failures awaited them; but at last the germ of the truth was in them, and it would not die. The Resurrection, with the events following, only confirmed and deepened the consciousness born when the three "were with Him in the Holy Mount."

Centuries later, the Church, formulating her faith in philosophical terms, said, "Jesus is the incarnation of the Second Person of the Ever Blessed and Glorious Trinity"; but her ultimate authority to make such a statement came not from philosophic speculation, but from the throbbing experience of the faithful.

The divinity of Jesus, then, is best revealed in all its winsomeness today to the man who, a disciple of Jesus, accompanies with Him, hears His words, talks with Him in the intimacies of personal fellowship, and honestly tries to live His life. To such a man Jesus makes Himself known, at first perhaps feebly, then more clearly, and finally like the glorious upushing sun in the dawning of a new day. Thus it is not the *unaided* intellect which brings men out from the midnight of disbelief into the daybreak of faith, but the mighty magnetism of the human-divine Christ, who said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Read St. John 14, noting evidences of Jesus' consciousness of standing in unique relationship to God.
2. Thoughtfully consider: (a) The significance of the fact that the deity of Jesus first dawned in the conviction of His contemporaries. (b) What practical difference, if any, for the Church and for the individual life today, is made by belief in the divinity of Jesus?

#### PRAYER

O Holy Spirit, Blessed Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son, who art ever leading men into a knowl-

edge of Thy truth, kindle in the hearts of all today who would be disciples of Jesus, the Son of God, such faith, devotion, and zeal as may send them forth, apostles of the Most High, to bear witness in our chaotic world. Lead the human race out of despair into hope, out of darkness into the glory of a new day yet to be. Strengthen the leaders of the nations, arouse the peoples, touch the heart of the Church, that misunderstanding, strife, and wrong may cease and the Kingdom of Christ prevail. Set the burning flame of Thy power upon our heads, until Thou hast made us and our world Thine own. We ask it in the name of Jesus, the Christ, God and man, Whom with the Father and Thee, O Gracious Spirit, we worship as One, now and forever.

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FOURTH WEEK

*THE MESSAGE OF  
THE REVEALING CHRIST*

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*Monday*

APRIL 1

THE MYSTERY

THE MESSAGE OF THE REVEALING CHRIST IS THE CHRIST Himself, who took upon Him our state and lot that He might confer His upon us. As such, He is a shining mystery; and all efforts to understand Him fail. He breaks through language and escapes, leaving our neat theories empty shells. He outtops our knowledge and baffles our thought—a revealed mystery, not a mystery revealed—a mystery dark with excess of light, to lead and lift our wayward race into the arms of God.

The vogue today is to admire Jesus as hero of religion, as genius, as teacher, as example, as pioneer, even as prophet, and to stop short of the thought of Him as God incarnate; but that is to fail of the goal of both fact and faith. It assumes that man is capable of getting to God by thinking, by mystical ecstasy, by moral effort, by his own insight; and that makes Jesus Himself a problem not the solution, a question not the answer to it, leaving us without fact to

free us from wistful futility, without truth to redeem us from fevered dreaming. We are still journeying without arriving, still seeking without finding the one Truth that makes all other truth true and triumphant.

In the Gospel it is not so. There Jesus is not a man-God, a little purer, wiser, and braver than we are, helping us to find God; but the God-man bringing God to us—"He Himself with His human air"—showing us how God comes to find man. It is the difference between a religion of culture and a gospel of salvation; between a slow emergence and a swift invasion—the advent of God into the life of man, awakening old memories, adding new meanings, and mingling fact and faith in the white light of truth. It is the religion of revelation that lifts life to a new level, giving it a new rhythm and a new radiance, so that man is freed from a tormenting inner dualism, and becomes master of himself through a power not his own.

No argument is needed; the fact proves it. Others might have uttered nearly every word that Jesus uttered; but it would have failed to move the human heart. Not every word, of course, since no sane man would dare say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In the same way, another might have lived a life of heroic moral loveliness and died upon a cross, a martyr; but he would not have drawn men, awed men, held men, like "that strange Man upon His Cross" outside the city gate, whose hurt is, somehow, our healing, and who made the darkness of death the master light of all our seeing. The secret of Jesus lies not in what He did, lovely and haunting as His deeds were; nor yet in what He said, though, in some strange way, every saying seems to contain the whole of Jesus. It lies in what He was—what He is, yesterday, today, and forever—in His person, not merely in His personality; in the fact that very God dwelt in our human shape.

"God was in Christ," as St. Paul put it; something which

the great prophets only sought and foretold; and it made a new era in the story of man, dividing it into before and after. It was an advent of the same order as the appearance of personality in animality, only more profound; in Him life passed from a self-regarding basis to an other-regarding basis. Love came to perfect and victorious expression, with the result that His person has acted as a transforming and redeeming energy among men. In contact with Him, men today, as in all the ages since the days of His flesh, are made whole, finding unity of life and at-one-ment with God: they are set free from fear, futility, and frustration; from sin, self-righteousness and dark fatality.

All is mystery, to be sure; but the mystery of Jesus is the revealing shadow of the Truth that has in it unknown redemptions, the truth each must learn in his own heart. As Schweitzer has said: "He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old by the lakeside He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word of command, 'Follow thou Me,' and sets us the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they pass through in His fellowship; and as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is."

#### PRAYER

O God Eternal, Thy thoughts are not as our thoughts. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are Thy ways above our ways. Thou didst set in our midst One whom we knew not, confronting our lives with His life, confounding our vanity with His humility. Our pride would choose a face as radiant as the morning; but His face was marred! In our folly we looked for one who should sit upon a throne; but He died upon a Cross, despised and rejected of man.

Truly, O God, it is not according to the wisdom of man

that such a One should save us, who could not save Himself. Our dream was of a Saviour who had all power; and He was weak. Our dream was of a warrior-saint, girt with flaming sword, to put evil to flight; but He was defeated, helpless, without defense, so that one smote Him on the cheek and seemed to suffer no harm. We thought He would threaten us in Thy awful name; but He spake in pity and tears.

Thus, O God, dost Thou reverse the order of our thinking and rebuke the folly of our wisdom. As we muse over the mystery of a power we call weakness, do Thou, O God, so deal with our foolish hearts that we shall begin to see Thy truth and to love Him anew who, in His trust in the power of love alone, forever withstands us for our redemption, even Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

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Tuesday

APRIL 2

### THE FELLOWSHIP<sup>1</sup>

HOW DID THE EARLY DISCIPLES OF JESUS KNOW WHO HE was, and what did they find in Him? By fellowship with Him which, deepening into friendship, became a revelation of God who, because He is love, is known only through love. As they walked with Jesus in Galilee and Judea, a change was wrought in their inner lives. God became real, living, near, ready to receive the erring, to forgive the sinful, to heal the afflicted; One whose love may be known in the simple joys of the lowly no less than in the vision of the seer. If at first Jesus was the most wonderful Friend they had ever known, at the end the most skeptical of the company was ready to say, "My Lord and my God!"

In the New Testament there are only two things. In the Gospels there is Jesus; in the Acts and Epistles there is the experience of Jesus in the lives of His followers. Too often we think of the Epistles as treatises in theology; but that is completely to misread them. Doctrine, of course, is there; but it is an effort to interpret what Jesus has done in the hearts of those who wrote or read them. They are not essays in philosophy, but transcripts—now immediately practical, now ecstatically mystical—revealing the unsearchable riches of grace which men had found in Jesus. What did Jesus do in the souls of men which made life radiant, where before it had been drab, turning tedium into *Te Deum*? What set them singing where once they had been dull, if not defeated?

One of the first things which the followers of Jesus found

<sup>1</sup> For this meditation, grateful acknowledgment is made of indebtedness to an essay by the Rev. George Jackson.

was that a wholly new kind of power had come into their lives—the very thing which we, too, sorely need. “To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God”; and it is still true—

Power into strengthless souls He speaks,  
And life into the dead.

“Our gospel,” said St. Paul, “came not unto you in word only, but also in power.” Its proof is not logical, but dynamic. It is known not merely by what it says, but by what it does; that is the key-note of all the letters of St. Paul—the staff he put into the hands of others, he had first leaned on himself, and found both comfort and conquest.

In prison he was not alone. “The Lord stood by me.” In tribulation he was happy; in every vicissitude he gave thanks. “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me” was his testimony in praise of Jesus the Enabler. “Power was with him in the night” of perplexity, of temptation, of discouragement, power to master dark moods and make his frail life an epic. All sorts of men, in all sorts of situations, have put this truth to the test, as the annals of biography bear witness—finding in Jesus power to do, to become, to endure, to triumph over the ills of life and the final mystery and frustration of death itself.

Also, in the fellowship of Jesus, men learned a new and revolutionary sense of their relation to others. St. Paul summed it up: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; ye are all one man in Christ.” Here was a truth cutting across lines of race, class, creed, sex, bridging yawning chasms of social status, blotting out the landmarks of life in the Roman world and in the world of today. Read the story of Onesimus, the runaway slave, who becomes to St. Paul “my child,” and is sent back to Philemon with a letter bidding him to receive him as “a brother beloved.” Such a spirit makes our fine

words about liberty, equality, and fraternity seem thin; and it would solve every social puzzle which vexes us. Nay, more, it is the religion we *say* we believe; but we only *half* believe it, else a juster, wiser, more humane social order would dawn upon our chaos.

Alas, for the first disciples, as for us, life ended in the finality of death. Here, too, Jesus altered the inner outlook and attitude of men, making them sure that in the darkness of death there is light. "If it were not so I would have told you," He said; and they believed His words and trusted His silence. In that day, as now, death was a thought to be put aside or concealed in fine phrases; but that is not the attitude of the Gospel. To the disciples of Jesus, death was an enemy—"the last enemy"—but an enemy which their Friend had conquered by the power of an endless life. The victory was final. Death was dead!

One thinks of the wisdom of Aristotle: "So far as possible to live as an immortal"; but it was the revealing Christ who made this possible in the face of brute fact and black fate. Such treasures men found in the fellowship of the mystery of Christ; and such trophies are for us when we are willing to achieve and ready to receive.

#### PRAYER

O God, the All-Merciful, we beseech Thee to hallow our hearts with Thy spirit, that we may truly hallow Thy name in the activity of our lives. Create in us a great faith in Thee and in the divine, lest the fleetingness of our mortal life dismay us and the flood of years sweep us away.

Thou Companion of our souls, make Thyself known to us in a new warmth of heart, a new clarity of insight, a new intimacy of understanding and benediction. Redeem us from ourselves. Teach us to find our home in Thy mighty Heart, that we may learn to read the meaning and value of the fleeting in the light of the everlasting.

Help us, Thou Friend of our hearts, to bring forth in our lives the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, a great magnanimity, and the faith that makes us faithful. Bestow upon us Thy rich grace, that we may reveal some likeness to Him in whose life Thou hast shown us what life is meant to be. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.



*Wednesday*

APRIL 3

THE DISCOVERY

TO KNOW THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST WE MUST SEE THAT He is more than a God-revealer, more than a God-definer. The fact on which the Gospel rests is that Jesus is the God-bearer, the God-sharer, in whom God and sinful, dying man are united. Not only does He show us the Father, but He brings God all the way to our need, that in receiving Him we receive God with Him and in Him. Jesus actually does what only God can do in dealing with the two deepest curses of life—Sin and Death.

In our day the word “sin” is vague, because our vision of God is dim. We do not see life, alike as act and state, as partaking of the vastness of the relations of man and God. But to Jesus sin was a grim, ghastly reality, a blind, stupid thing, a horror to God and a hurt to man. Yet, horrible as it is, Jesus was never hopeless about it, never sin-obsessed, as so many have been. He knew that there is that in God which can forgive sin and heal it. “He bore our sins,” is the haunting refrain of the Gospel music; and if Jesus did not explain its meaning in words, He did in deeds.

As He forgave the sins of a man before healing him, His critics asked, “Who can forgive sins but God only?” and they were right. Only God is stronger than the dark Karmic law, by which sin binds us with its stain and guilt; He alone, not remitting penalty, can reknit the soul to Himself. Jesus fulfilled this office of God to man, not only lifting the shadow of remorse, but setting the soul free to soar, see, and sing.

Such love breaks the heart—and mends it; such grace is beyond the wit of man. It is the gift of God and His glory forever.

It is the meaning of the Cross, so far as we can fathom it. Love in God is not a sticky sentimentalism which slurs sin, not a coddling indulgence blind to holiness, not an easy amiability without insight; it is a Calvary. In one black, bitter hour the Cross unveils the “costingness” of sin to God, as von Hügel used to say; a mystery beyond our ken, revealing a mercy beyond our words to tell. No wonder the words of St. Paul, as he pondered that mystery, stammered, as if blinded by its wonder; and no wonder his argument always ended in an anthem.

But, alas! even the Cross ended in a tomb, following a forlorn march of dust. If Jesus had not dealt with death, entering it not as a victim but as a victor, breaking through it, using its terror as a tool, the Cross would be the final frustration. Else, Jesus and Judas melt into the same mire; our highest faith is a fiction, our hope a pitiful futility, and the song of life a foolish ditty or a dirge. It was the empty tomb, robbed of its prey, which set the world singing. It may be mysticism; but it is a mysticism without which life is sere and brown and bitter, as it is for so many in our day of dim half-light.

As Jesus said, “Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” This is the law of the multiplication of life through death. We find in death a law of life, not a seal of failure but the secret of success. Only God can thus deal with death, shattering its tyranny, making it not a relief from life but a release into life. “He hath abolished death,” think of it!—as the radio abolishes distance, by showing that it is not what we in fear had dreaded. In our argument we urge that what has value in the sight of God is safe forever, un-

touched by time and death; and Jesus is the fact that proves it once for all.

The world today rots and stinks, lacking a new vision of life. Our materialism is disintegration, our pessimism is poison, our cynicism is a form of death. The future of society rests with those who know the eternal life, and live by its power. All the dear interests and institutions of humanity have their basis in the eternal life, or else they cannot abide. This is the secret, no less, of social stability, else customs are cobwebs and laws are ropes of sand. The power of an endless life is the creative and constructive force in our human life, without which we have philosophies without vision and sciences without soul. The insights which impel man to vaster issues are the outshinings of a spiritual order, the pressure upon him of the eternal life.

To each of us in our life and love and service—in our sorrow, so devastating betimes—the message of Jesus, and His dealing with sin and death, is meat, medicine, and music. In Him we become aware of what life is, what it means, and what it prophesies; all doors are open, and the great aspirations of the heart take wings. Life grows in dignity, worth, and power if lived in the fellowship of the mystery of Christ, the Lord and Giver of Life.

#### PRAYER

Grant us grace, O Lord our God, ardently to desire, wisely to study, rightly to understand, and faithfully to fulfill that which pleaseth Thee; that, living in Thee, we may know the power of an endless life.

Sanctify to us our daily bread, we humbly pray; hallow its routine, its drudgery, its temptations, its blinding bereavements; that the spiritual may grow up through the common, and some loveliness of soul bloom in us amid the harsh facts of life.

O God, suffer us not to fall, at last, through extremity of

bodily anguish or darkness of mind, to any lower thought than we have had in our noblest hours; let us stand upright at Thy door, O lover of Souls, looking for the Face long desired, the face of uttermost Love, even Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our hope and our help.



*Thursday*

APRIL 4

THE ADVENTURE

JESUS DID NOT SAY, "FOLLOW MY TEACHING." HE SAID, "Follow Me." His Gospel is not a law enacted, but a love imparted. Men followed Him at first drawn not by the truth He taught, but by Himself; they discovered His truth later as they saw it lived out in His life. Until we see Jesus as the center of His truth, its source, its sanction, and the secret by which it is obeyed, we have not learned the Gospel. If His yoke is easy and His burden light, it is because He Himself bears it with us, making possible what it is futile to try without Him.

If we separate the ethical from the mystical, as a branch from the vine, the teaching of Jesus is too high, too hard; we cannot attain unto it. Only Christ-men can live the Christ-life. Not until St. Paul was so at one with Christ in the essence and energy of his life that he could say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me," did he win the victory. Only then did he know the Love that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things; a Love that cannot be defeated by life or time or death.

In our day we too often think of the truth of Jesus apart from Himself, as if He did not say, "I *am* the truth." To take the Sermon on the Mount as a law laid down, not as a vision shown, and to try to live it by our own effort alone, is to fail. As well try to climb the high white peaks of Mt. Everest. Follow Jesus? When? Always! Where? Every-

where, in every relation, at any cost, though it lead to a cross! Who of us is equal to it? Not one, yet that is the meaning of discipleship, if it has any meaning. No wonder we follow Jesus afar off, like the disciples of old, dismayed if not terrified by the audacity of it.

No. The Gospel of Jesus is a message of love using a method of friendship, as when He said, "I have called you friends"—an exalted and exacting word. To be His friend, not merely to have Him as our Friend. All of us desire Jesus for our Friend, but am I willing to be His friend, One who shares His sorrow, to whom He shows His wounds and confides His desperate purposes, asking my utmost love and loyalty? This is the greatest adventure known among men, demanding all that we have of faith, fortitude, and fidelity. That is what He asks, nothing else, nothing less. Think of what it implies, as one has swiftly summed it up:

1. As regards our own soul, absolute integrity, not only in the sense of purity of motive and purpose, but as meaning all there is of us. We must be sincere, all there, in single-hearted devotion to the will of Jesus, in final surrender to His purpose, if we are to be sharers of His passion and bearers of His message. No divided allegiance, no hesitant, half-hearted attitude will do. "This one thing I do," said St. Paul, forgetting the past, and striving like a runner in a race, seeking to be found in Christ; and Christ formed in him "the hope of glory."

2. In relation to our fellow-men, absolute goodwill in face of anger and even injury; a creative and undiscourageable goodwill. No riddle would remain unsolved, no hurt unhealed, if that spirit prevailed. It seems the end of envy, of resentment, of retaliation and the things that make for strife. Never will there be peace on earth, except among men of goodwill—to hope for it otherwise is vain. Such goodwill, as we see it in Jesus, is persistent but patient; it never

stops and never tires; it forgives and by its own genius helps to create the thing it seeks.

3. In our attitude toward God, absolute trust, in spite of evil and the untoward vicissitudes of life. Truly, if God is what Jesus is, faith in God is inevitable, despite the dark, tragic mysteries of life. But, alas! how few attain to such confidence, as Jesus did on His high, triumphant Cross. For most of us such faith is like a fourth dimension; we may argue that it exists, but it is remote and unreal. Yet to such faith we are called, as the disciples of Christ, if we are to be aware of what can be done in this world, and what is worth doing.

By a high ideal we are challenged, and we might well sink into utter despair before it without Jesus and the power He releases in us. One who takes it seriously will need to keep in constant contact with the dynamic of Christ, by prayer, by sacrament, by all the arts and offices through which we may invoke His life in us. No wonder St. Paul felt himself a sinner saved by grace if saved at all, knowing himself unequal to what was required of him. Yet, though we fail much, no other adventure is so thrilling, giving life an epic worth and meaning and prophecy, lifting our fleeting existence into an immortal fellowship.

#### PRAYER

Eternal Father, who hast taught us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Thee; grant us grace, we beseech Thee, to be doers of Thy word and not hearers only, living in near friendship with Thee and love of one another, translating faith into truth; and may all that is untrue within us yield to Thy fire, and the fire burn until there is nothing but light.

O Christ, our Lord and Savior, as those who are poor in spirit because we have seen something very rich, we pray that there may be no peace in us until we are more and

better than we are, until our groping, faltering lives are centers of Thy light and power and love; that we may be messengers of Thy truth and servants of Thy goodwill, making trial of a great trust in God, to whom be glory forever more.



*Friday*

APRIL 5

### THE CHALLENGE

AT THE END OF HIS TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, JESUS WENT into Galilee preaching "the Gospel of God," telling the best news ever heard by man—good news from God. For the first time on this, our earth, Jesus, by living "the human life of God," made men glad about God. Not as in the word of a prophet, but in Himself, by His friendship, He made men aware of the near-neighborliness and far-friendliness of God the Father; of His love that never gives up and will not let us go.

If we know what God is, what His purpose is, everything else is mere detail. Once we know that God cares, God shares, God bears, the weary weight of an unintelligible world is lifted. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," said Jesus: the way from God to man, then the way of man to God; the truth about God, our Guide and Goal, why He seeks us and how we may find Him, we who cannot be happy until He has won us to Himself; the truth about life whereby, in spite of its ills, its meaning is turned into music and even its drudgery has the lilt of a lyric.

In His life of love Jesus made for us the love of God real, available, ineffable; and in His words, rich in cargoes of wonder, He made it music. No other words stir us so deeply; they quench an intolerable fear; they heal a hurt within us which, if left unmended, turns life bitter. Jesus faced the dark facts of existence—its folly, its fatalism, its hot passion, its cold selfishness, its final shadow—but without dismay. Each of the parables of Lost Things ends in song. He was

Master of life, victorious where we are defeated, joyous where we are in despair. In the last thrust of thought, we must either accept Jesus or be reduced to desperation, fighting a dim battle in a doubtful land.

By the same token, as Jesus is the truth about God, He is also the truth about man. As Emerson said, He alone saw the greatness of the soul, what it really is—winged, wistful, willful—the value of the soul to God, and to what fine issues the soul may ascend; and in His advent He made it the cradle of the love of God. When Pilate cried, “Behold, the Man!” he uttered more truth about our humanity than he dreamed of, rebuking the cynicism to which we are tempted in a day when the value of man is depressed to the point of panic. If democracy has any meaning, its basis must be in the worth and sanctity of each human being, else we may become only cogs in a machine or “Shirts” in a parade. The mind-set of our generation is all towards coercion. The future of liberty is with Jesus, who stands before us holding the gifts of the spirit in bleeding hands.

To our age, distracted by fear, torn by strife, haunted by frustration, the message of Jesus is a challenge and a command. In his vanity, man once fell from trust in God to self-sufficiency; and now he has lost faith even in himself, and is threatened with spiritual nihilism. As Berdyaev puts it, “Where there is no God there is no man, because man without God is no longer man.” If man is a robot, he will live like a robot; if he is a brute, his life will be a vulgar brutality, as so much of our present-day life is. The *débâcle* of our generation had its source in the secret places of the soul, when man let go of God, let the vision of Him grow dim, and thought to rule his own wild heart and direct his own life.

If we are to find our way back to sanity, to say nothing of sanctity, it must be by surrender to the rule of God, as Jesus taught us. They speak to pitiless forces who hope by political

science to do what can be done only by spiritual salvation. Not by might, not by cleverness, but by the spirit of Jesus mediated in a skillful, ministrant love that works in fellowship, can we find the way out. Else society will become a jungle, and war will follow war, each more frightful than the last, until the world is a charred and smoking ruin. Collectivism will not save us, nor group rule. Our hope lies in the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. If we seek that first, the rest will be added.

It is not impossible; it is inevitable. Our need is to make the message of Jesus—as we have interpreted it, Jesus Himself—vivid and vital, by act and word, and still more by incarnation in our lives, by an apostolate of the love of God; bringing Christ more revealingly into the life of the Church, and more triumphantly into the stresses and strains of social crisis. If the gospel is unable to save us in our need here, it cannot save us anywhere else. Jesus taught us to pray for the Kingdom of God to come *on earth*; and that is the challenge of our age.

#### PRAYER

Lord and Giver of Life, we beseech Thee to live in us vividly, victoriously, filling our lives with Thy light and Thy love; that, with truth-illumined minds and love-anointed hands, we may make the message of Jesus fruitful in the healing of human hearts and the building of the beloved community amongst men.

O God Ineffable, in the glory of the morning, grant us Thy blessing; and in the gloaming of the day let Thy peace be upon our hearts. By Thy grace may tomorrow be better than yesterday, more bravely and faithfully lived, more free from fear and foreboding, more full of faith and friendship; and to Thee shall be the praise; in the Name of Jesus.



Saturday

APRIL 6

THE COMPANION

IF THE CHRIST WERE *only* A FIGURE IN THE PAST, HAVING A place in history and a date in time, He would be fascinating, but not the Christ. What is more wonderful, and none the less well attested, is that through the ages He has been an eternal contemporary, at once the inner colleague of human souls and an unseen world-power, purifying, exalting, and redeeming our life on earth. Not Moses, nor Buddha, nor Plato, nor any of the great torch-bearers and way-showers of man, has such strange power of immediateness.

As an Indian seer has put it, Jesus has a unique power of *insisting on Himself*; of haunting man as by a living presence, not merely as a memory, or even an ideal, but in actual fellowship with human souls; not alone in the early years when His radiance was still aglow, but in the darkest times down all the ages. It was His promise: "Go ye into all nations, and lo! I am with you to the very end of the world"; and if these amazing words had not been fulfilled, they would seem expression of the vague and impossible dream of one duped by a delusion of divinity; but they have been fulfilled.

"The Lord stood before me," said St. Paul, in telling of his first trial before Cæsar, when he was left alone. But for Jesus and the fellowship He vouchsafed me, said Paton of New Hebrides, he felt he must have gone mad beside the lonely grave, dug by his own hands, in which he buried his wife and child. So runs the testimony of the ages, growing

and gathering volume: it is the secret of the greatest lives, as well as the source of the continuing life of the Church. Again, in our day nothing can save the Church, heal it of schism, and make it equal to its task, but the Christ who created it and has guided it.

But wherefore is Christ with us betimes, our companion and the only Friend who is going all the way? Merely for our comfort and the healing of our hearts? No; though, as at Emmaus, He suffers Himself to be detained to break the bread of fellowship. Even there "He made as though He would have gone further"; and when He had hallowed their hospitality, He went on His way. He has business to do which takes Him to the ends of the earth; He is a herald, not one out for a stroll; He is the pilgrim Christ, still seeking the lost, still toiling to create a Kingdom built on the service of God and on love.

A famous Jewish saint, asked to state what he deemed deepest and most original in the message of Jesus, put it in this way. All the rabbis, he said, taught that God welcomes the sinner in his repentance, and forgives his sin. But to *seek out* the sinner, as in the Parable of the Lost Sheep, and, instead of avoiding the bad man, choose him as a friend and so work for his moral redemption—that, he said, is something novel; a new religious type. Exactly; and it is that inner urge to redeem, at once the compulsion of love and loyalty, in which we find the secret of the advent of Jesus and the genius of His whole enterprise—as set to music in the three great gospel hymns of the Nativity.

In the *Magnificat* is celebrated the most extraordinary personal experience in the annals of the race—how, through the life of the greatest woman who ever lived, the life of very God entered, as a revolutionary love, into the life of man. In the *Benedictus* a national faith sings of the tender mercy of God, who visited and redeemed His people, giving light to them that sit in darkness: a hymn of spiritual patri-

otism athrob with passion and prophecy. On the music moves, in concentric circles, outward bound, until in the *Nunc Dimittis*, it is a salvation prepared before the face of all peoples; one music made haunting, healing, and victorious by the divine impulse to seek, save, serve.

If these things are so, wherefore the mood of dismay, akin to defeat, which haunts the Church today? If God is for us, if Christ is with us—nay, within us, when we admit Him—who can be against us, save as we let go, give up, and sink into faithlessness and futility? Greater is He that is in the Church than he that is in the world, with all its witty cynicism, its brittle wisdom, and its brutal greed. The Gospel which grasped the crumbling classic world and reshaped it, despite disintegration, can master the federated forces of evil in our gay and giddy-paced age, disinfecting it of foulness and using its genius and power.

The victory of Christ, in whom the Spirit of God unites with the spirit of man, is inevitable. He will have His way with this world, to the confounding of all unkindness, all injustice. Ultimately, every tyranny shall fall. One Figure commands the scene. In the noisy, murky foundry of the world, a bell is cast that shall ring His praise alone. Without Him we can do nothing; with Him we cannot fail.

#### PRAYER

Almighty Father, who hast made of one blood all men who dwell upon the earth, and hast sent us to tell the wonder of Thy love to the races and nations, so enlarge our minds and deepen our hearts, we pray Thee, that our love may be a world-feeling, and our sorrow a world-grief, until Thy light and Thy truth shine in all the dark places of the earth, and Thy saving love is the joy of all men.

O Holy Spirit of God, Revealer of truth, Redeemer of the souls of men, hear our prayer, we humbly beseech Thee,

for the unity of the Church and the peace of the world; and so bestow upon Thy people largeness of mind, and a purified understanding, that mankind may be redeemed from bigotry and brutality into the light of Thy truth and the fellowship of Thy love; through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

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FIFTH WEEK

*THE KINGDOM OF  
THE REVEALING CHRIST*

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*Monday*

APRIL 8

THE KINGDOM

READING: St. Matthew, chapter 13.

*Jesus came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying, the time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel.—St. Mark 1:14, 15.*

*The Kingdom of God!* THE CENTRAL THEME IN ALL Christ's teaching, His supreme purpose, His absorbing passion, His one great goal proclaimed for all men! All that He says about the Father, Himself, men and their duties, is found in these words—"Thy Kingdom come!"

Its character He vividly illustrates by parables, those "earthly stories with a heavenly meaning." The Kingdom is alive and growing like a mustard seed; it is invisible, expansive like yeast hidden in a measure of meal; it is the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, a drag-net flung on a wide sea of men, without respect to persons; it is a field of wheat with tares in the midst, growing until harvest; it is a

noble adventure, like a journey into a far country; it is a king's feast, to which everyone is invited.

In startling paradoxes the Master describes the Kingdom. It is in the future ("until the Kingdom of God shall come"), and yet ever-present (the Kingdom is amongst you); it can be possessed now (Blessed the poor; theirs *is* the Kingdom), and yet must be earnestly sought ("Seek ye first the Kingdom!"); it is not of this earth ("My Kingdom is not of this world"), and yet it is a definite fellowship ("I give unto you the keys of the Kingdom").

To our Lord and to His hearers it meant no mere vague human social ideal, to be achieved by riding along on the back of "that amiable monster called evolution." Man's effort is kindled and invoked to bring it to realization; but it is not man's creation. We neither determine its character nor establish its conditions; it is the gift and work of God. The Kingdom is God's Kingdom; it rests upon His character and is governed by His law.

1. Let us think of the august fact of the Sovereignty of God. He is King; not the president or dictator chosen by us, but sovereign Lord of all in His own divine right. Never can some of us forget the closing words of Archbishop Temple's noble sermon at the opening service of the Lambeth Conference in Saint Paul's Cathedral, as he preached on *The Majesty of God*:

"While we deliberate, He reigns; when we decide wisely, He reigns; when we decide foolishly, He reigns; when we serve Him loyally, He reigns; when we serve Him assertively, He reigns; when we rebel and seek to withhold our service, He reigns—the Alpha and Omega, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty!"

God's perfect will is the governing power of the universe, controlling every detail of it. What, then, is there left for me to do? What responsibility have I? Perhaps, says some

one, determinism after all is true, and there is no place for man's freedom in this complete autocracy of God. But my own experience teaches me otherwise. That tingling sense of freedom within me, that consciousness of moral responsibility, that sudden and smiting sense of guilt when I consciously and willfully do what I know I ought not to do, that luminous and lively feeling of victory when I do "the high for earth too high, the heroic for earth too hard"—these do not betray me. They are real experiences. God, who created man in his own image, has made us free to choose or to reject His will. The very persons who, like St. Paul and St. Augustine, felt they were clay in the Potter's hands, are the ones who put forth the most amazing and almost super-human exertions to serve God. "They knew that the clay which the Potter molds is not some inert mass of lifeless human qualities, but the living will of man."

2. Let us think of the nature of the Divine King as revealed by Jesus. Above all else, He taught that God is *personal*; not an abstract "cosmic environment", but a Father. The term "Father" applied to God was not original with Him. Its use can be paralleled from many Jewish sources. But He gave it a new meaning, a fresh and revolutionary interpretation. And the center of it was this—that God's love goes out to men to seek and to save with a constancy and unwearied patience like that of a shepherd looking for a lost and beloved sheep. The fifteenth chapter of St. Luke (the *evangelium in evangelio*) tells the story in a word. A son wandered far. He abused the freedom his father gave him. But when he came to himself and started home, the father "saw him far off and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

Our God is a kingly father who would not that any of his princely little ones should perish. That makes Him no

less a king to be obeyed. But, oh, the difference when the face of the father is seen beneath the crown of the king!

3. Let us think upon our Lord's stern imperatives: "Repent and believe!"

*Repentance* means that I have caught the vision of the holy, loving, sovereign Father; and all my selfishness and uncleanness I hate and deny. "I do truly and earnestly repent me of my sins," my pride and envy and anger and covetousness and gluttony and lust and sloth. I "intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking henceforth in His holy ways."

*Belief* means that I stop doubting God, and trust Him; stop fearing what man may do unto me, and trust Him; stop worrying about myself, my health, my possessions, my life, and invest myself in His great enterprise. Faith, Jesus said, can move mountains. I resolve to doubt no more, but to "put my whole trust and confidence in Him."

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Tuesday

APRIL 9

### THE KING WITH THE CROWN OF THORNS

READINGS: St. John 18:28 to 19:16; Revelation 17:14.

*"So you are a king, said Pilate—you! Certainly, said Jesus, I am a king. . . . My realm does not belong to this world."*

—St. John 19:36, 37 (Moffatt Translation).

OUR LORD NOT ONLY PREACHED THE KINGDOM OF GOD. HE identified Himself with God the Father as King of the Kingdom. ("That ye may eat and drink at *My* Table in *My* Kingdom." "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with the angels."—"There be some standing here which shall see the Son of Man coming in *His* Kingdom.") St. Paul speaks of the Father who "hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, who is the Image of the invisible God." St. Peter calls it "the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Revelation describes a great shout going up in heavenly places, with "great voices in heaven saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever!" "We see Jesus," says the writer of the Hebrews, "who was made a little lower than the angels for suffering and death, crowned with glory and honour!"

On Calvary He hangs bleeding upon the Cross, with a crown of thorns in brutal, cynical irony jammed down upon His brow, and over His head a sign, "King of the Jews." That was His death sentence, that He made Himself an equal with God and a rival of the Emperor. "We have no King but Cæsar!" yelled the mob. Yet, strangely, the world

ever since has recognized no rival with Jesus as the kingliest of men. Lifted up, He has drawn, as He said He would, all men unto Him; and

The head that once was crowned with thorns  
Is crowned with glory now.

1. Let us think of Christ our Divine King. Wherein lies His kingliness?

“O Iole! how did you know that Hercules was a god?” “Because,” answered Iole, “I was content the moment my eyes fell on him. When I beheld Theseus, I desired that I might see him offer battle or at least guide his horses in the chariot race: but Hercules did not wait for a contest: he conquered whether he stood or walked or sat or whatever thing he did!”

It is not the recorded miracles which prove our Lord to be divine. It is not even His Virgin Birth, not even His Resurrection. These we may accept as congruous, reasonable, to be expected in the face of what He was. But His claim to Lordship rests upon His transcendent life of moral spiritual splendor. “No man spake as this man;” Yes, and no man lived as He lived or died as He died.

Consider His sinlessness. Why does He, who denounced self-righteousness as the sin of sins, betray in Himself no consciousness of sin, unless He were indeed sinless? Why have we no record of sin being imputed to Him by His enemies? Saints hasten to accuse themselves. Theresa calls herself “the Sinner”; Francis went to lepers for a penance; Paul calls himself “the chief of sinners.” But Jesus stands alone—upon a unique and solitary height of holy, sinless splendor. All others

Wanting: all, all,—  
But Thee, O man’s best man, O Love’s best love,  
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,  
O all men’s Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—  
What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,

What least defect or shadow of defect,  
 What rumor tattled by an enemy,  
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace  
 Even in torture's grasp, or sleep, or death's,—  
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee  
 Jesus, good Paragon, thōu Crystal Christ?<sup>1</sup>

Consider again His claim of authority to forgive sins, to heal not only the ills of the body but those of the soul as well; to substitute His word of authority even for the divine law given through Moses.

Consider yet again His peremptoriness of appeal for instant and complete allegiance. He does not say, "Follow God!" He says, "Follow Me!" He does not say, "God is the light of the world," but, "I am the light of the world," and, "I am the bread," and, "I am the way, the truth and the life." It is He whom men are to follow: it is He to whom the weary and heavy laden are to come: it is He for whom they are to forsake father and mother. He demands utter, absolute, undivided devotion to Himself. And yet He impresses us not as arrogant, but as meek and lowly of heart. His claim to sovereignty carries with it its own high and clear credentials.

2. Let us think of our King as the Divine Sufferer. Why should He die? To speed the coming of the Kingdom. "It must needs be." Some crowning act was necessary to call out in men the full measure of penitence and faith, before He could set up His Kingdom.

God for our own sake makes the need extreme,  
 Till at the last He puts forth strength and saves.

"The Son of Man *must* suffer." We stand in the darkness, and look long and steadily at that mystery of the crucifixion, and listen to the words from the Cross; and presently we are on our knees, with hearts beating fast, sobbing like St. Paul, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

<sup>1</sup> From "The Crystal," by Sidney Lanier. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons.

3. The King calls me. I must follow Him; but He tells me that I, too, shall have to deny myself and take up my cross daily, to follow Him. My King is the Crucified. Unless I suffer with Him, I cannot reign with Him.

“The kingdoms of the earth go by  
In purple and in gold;  
They rise, they flourish and they die  
And all their tale is told;  
One Kingdom only is divine,  
One banner triumphs still;  
Its King—a servant, and its sign—  
A gibbet on a hill.”



Wednesday

APRIL 10

### THE CHURCH AS THE KINGDOM

READINGS: Ephesians 1:15-23 and 5:25-32.

*I will build my Church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.—St. Matthew, 15:18, 19.*

BERNARD SHAW ONCE REMARKED THAT OUR LORD “GAILY founded His Church upon a pun.” The reference, of course, is to the words (the pun comes out both in Latin and Greek), “*Tu es Petrus* (thou art Peter) *et super hæc petra* (upon this rock) *ædificabo meam ecclesiam* (I will build my Church.)” Peter had just made the great confession of faith, “Thou art Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Our Saviour blessed him and went on to say, “Rock thou art and on this rock I will build.” The great majority of the Church Fathers maintain that “this rock” does not apply to Peter, but to the faith expressed by him as spokesman for the rest. Certainly the power bestowed on Peter in this text to bind and loose is given equally to all the Apostles on two other occasions. (See St. Matthew 18:18, and St. John 20:22, 23.)

There can be no question that Our Lord established a definite organization and committed to it the great enterprise of His Kingdom. By the time of St. Paul, the two are so identified that the Kingdom is rarely mentioned by him. The term occurs but fourteen times in his epistles; what occurs continually, as its equivalent, is the term “the Church.”

Our Lord chose twelve men. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." And in the Upper Room he said to them, "I appoint unto you a Kingdom as My Father hath appointed Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

He was not so much founding a new Church as refounding an old one. He was creating a new twelve tribes of Israel, with a spiritual "New Jerusalem" for a center, not destroying but fulfilling all the dreams of the prophets for the coming of the Kingdom. "Twelve, whom also He named Apostles." This little community was unquestionably the center of Our Lord's particular interest, the peculiar object of His instruction; its members were the chosen sharers in the sacred mysteries of His passion, the chosen witnesses of His resurrection, the nucleus of the group of faithful disciples who in the old, familiar rendezvous of the Upper Room were together with one accord when the first baptismal power of the Spirit, at Pentecost, sent them flaming out into the highways of the world as the feet and hands and voices of the Risen Christ.

Our Lord's final words are a commission to this organization, which is in truth a divine organism. "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

1. Let us get certain points very clear. The Church is not a convenient group of lovers of Christ who organize anywhere, anyhow, any time, and agree to worship together. It is not a mere human institution. It is a divine organism, which St. Paul repeatedly describes as the "Body of Christ." You do not join it "when you feel good enough." You are born into it by baptism. It was our Lord Himself, not some

mediæval theologian, who said, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

It is not a club for saints: it is a hospital for sinners. Our Lord described it as a net spread to catch all sorts of fish: and as a field in which tares grew sturdily and boldly alongside of the wheat. He alone claimed the right to do the separating of one from the other.

He did not leave this Church of His without discipline. "If thy brother shall trespass," He said, "go and tell him his fault; if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more; if he shall neglect to hear, then tell it unto the Church; if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Above all, He did not leave it without a guaranteed place and manner of meeting Him ("Do this in remembrance of Me"); nor without a mystical way to fuse His divine incarnate life with our own. "This is My Body broken for you: this is My Blood of the New Covenant." "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you."

2. The Church is called in Scripture the Bride of Christ, as well as the Body of Christ. St. Paul says, "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it." I, who have been baptized and made a very branch of the living Vine, a very member of the living Body, —what kind of a Churchman am I? Faithful in the Church's public worship, in her ministries of service, in supporting and extending her? Can I say, and mean it, that

I love the Church, the holy Church  
That o'er our life presides,  
The birth, the bridal and the grave,  
And many an hour besides.  
Be mine through life to live in her  
And, when the Lord shall call,  
To die in her—the spouse of Christ,  
The mother of us all!

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Thursday

APRIL 11

## THE INWARDNESS AND OUTWARDNESS OF THE KINGDOM

READINGS: St. Luke 13:18-30; St. John, chapter 6.

*Behold the Kingdom of God is within you.—St. Luke 17:21.*

*The reign of God is now amongst you—(Moffatt).*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS *within* you!" THERE ARE MANY who interpret this to mean that the Kingdom of God is a subjective spiritual state. They can get along very well, they say, without the Church, without her faith or ministry or sacraments. Did not our Lord say the Kingdom is *within* you? Well, He did not say that. What He did say was, "The Kingdom of God is in your *midst*: it is amongst you!" He was addressing the Pharisees, whose conception of the Kingdom was a half-political, half-religious national state. Our Lord was asked by them when the Kingdom would come, and he replied, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say lo here, or lo there; for look, the Kingdom of God is amongst you!"

There is, indeed, what Rufus Jones beautifully calls "the Kingdom within the soul." Of course there is a genuinely mystical reality to the statement that "the beyond is the within." The Kingdom of God can never prevail in the social order until it is set up in the hidden inward life of each of us, until there are no deeps in our consciousness unplumbed by the searching standards of light, no doors within barred to the entrance of the King. His train, like that in Isaiah's vision, must fill the temple.

But the personal inward experience of the Kingdom and

its objective social form known as the Church must not and cannot be divorced. We cannot substitute a selfish conception of merely individual salvation for the corporate redemption which Christ came to preach. Personal pietism is no substitute for the redemption of the world.

There is an outward and an inward to everything. We all live in two worlds, the outer and the inner, the world of space-time and the world of the Eternal, the world of sense and the world of spirit. To deny either, or to exalt one at the cost of the other, is to shatter reality.

Now, the Church has the clearest and most illuminating philosophy in the world. She regards, as her Lord did, all of life *sacramentally*. Nothing is more important to grasp than this. A sacrament is defined in the Church's catechism as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ, as a means whereby we receive the same and as a pledge to assure us thereof." A symbol merely *represents* something, as a package of cigarettes painted on a billboard represents a favorite brand. It does not convey the thing signified. On the other hand, a lamp (if it be connected) not only represents light, but conveys the light it represents. It is, therefore, an efficacious symbol, in a real sense a sacrament. A wax effigy of a man is a symbol; but a living, breathing body is the sacrament of a man. It is of the very nature of a sacrament that it has two sides, one outward and visible, the other inward and spiritual. The former is the vehicle of the latter. You can destroy a sacrament by taking away the inward and spiritual reality; or you can equally destroy it by taking away the outward and visible sign.

The Sacraments of the Church, too, are not mere outward forms or symbols. They are rather *foci* for contact with Christ through His mystical Body, which is itself a great sacrament. They are avenues of grace within the covenanted sphere of His Kingdom.

1. Let us think of the Sacraments. Our Church teaches us that "there are two only ordained by Christ in His Church as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." This does not mean that these are the only sacraments; it means what it says, that only these two were *ordained by Christ as generally necessary to salvation*. They are not empty forms or beautiful symbolic ceremonies. They are vital sacraments of Christ's Body.

*The Font* stands, or should stand, at the entrance of the Church. Why? Because Baptism is the gate of entrance to the Kingdom. Because therein is the outward and visible sign of water, wherein human beings are baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Therein the person baptized is "Christened" (a corruption of "Christianed") and is "made a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." At that time he receives a Kingdom name, a "Christian name," because he is now incorporated into the Christian fellowship.

*The Altar* stands exalted in the innermost sanctuary of the Church. Why? Because it is the luminous meeting-place, the Holy of Holies of the Church, the sacred Upper Room where we meet the Risen Lord in His own appointed way. There the outward and visible sign is "bread and wine which the Lord commanded to be received" and the inward part or thing signified is "the Body and Blood of Christ which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

"And except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." The food of the Kingdom is the life of the Divine Incarnate One Himself. All the sacraments correspond to deep inward needs of the soul. That soul reaches out, like the woman in the Gospel, to touch the hem of His garment and to find grace to help in time of need.

2. Is my inner life in the Kingdom within fed by sacramental grace, so that it becomes a more abundant life? Do I use the means of grace as I should? Am I regularly, after careful preparation, at the Lord's Table, that "my body may be cleansed by His Body and my soul washed by His most precious Blood?" If I feed not upon the Food of the Kingdom, which is the very Revealing Christ, incarnate among His own, how can I do His will?

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Friday

APRIL 12

THE SPIRIT OF THE KINGDOM

READINGS: St. Matthew, chapters 5, 6, 7; St. Luke, chapter 6.  
*True worshipers shall worship Him in spirit and truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*—St. John 4:23.

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A MORAL CODE, AN ETHICAL SYSTEM like that of Mencius or Confucius. It is above all else a *spirit*. “If any man have not the *spirit of Christ*, he is none of His.” “We know that He abideth in us by the *spirit* which He hath given us.” We may profess with our lips the Christian Faith and follow in our practice the Christian rule of life—and still be Pharisees. The supreme test of the Kingdom of Christ is “the spirit which dwelleth in us.” It is easier to be orthodox than to be meek and merciful and pure in heart. It is easier to be comfortably respectable than to be poor in spirit and persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

The world has its standards of respectability. It professes even today, in our pagan revival of decadence, a sanctimonious reproach of the sot and the harlot and the thief. Jesus goes infinitely deeper than that. With irony, and to the great dismay of the “unco guid,” He told them plainly that “the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you!” It was to a thief that He said on the Cross, “Today with me in Paradise.” The letter killeth. The spirit giveth life. Our Lord regarded the sins which involve a measure of social reproach as “far less ruinous to real moral progress than the easy acquiescence in the standards of the

world." Virtue may be and often is the product of self-interest. Jesus always went deep, for the motive.

The thing to which He summons men is not a mere change of morals, but a change of heart. They must "be turned and become as little children" to enter His Kingdom. Was He thinking then of the innocence of childhood, or its freedom from worry, or its spontaneous truthfulness, or its winged idealism? Perhaps. But surely He meant something deeper, something vastly more radical and revolutionary. Men must start all over again, slough off conventional modes of thought and traditional taboos, all the stale accumulated shams of pretended religion—in short, "*be born again.*" It is the "twice-born" men and women who have made the Kingdom of Christ a triumph in the world: an Augustine into whose life of a libertine "*Tolle! Lege!*" crashed like a bell of doom; a Francis to whom in Umbria came the command, "Build my Church," a command which turned him inside out and through him turned the world of his day completely upside down.

1. Let us consider some marks of the spirit of Christ in a changed life. Above all there is a deep inward sincerity. "It has been said of old, thou shalt not kill; but I say—beware of anger as though it were murder." "It has been said, thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say—beware of impure thoughts as though they were adultery." "Pluck out your eye, cut off your hand, if necessary; but keep the spirit inviolate." "You have heard, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say, If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn the other also; if a man take thy coat, give him thy cloak. If he compel thee to go a mile with him, go two miles. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in

heaven." Love is the great, triumphant force in life. "He that loves," echoes St. John, "is born of God."

It is those who have penetrated to the deep, inward spirit of God, and shown it in their lives, that he pronounces blessed: the *poor in spirit* (poverty *in* spirit does not mean poverty *of* spirit); in other words, those who have no passion for the accumulation of material things, those who have the grace to deny the acquisitive instinct, those who refuse to divide service between God and Money; the *sorrowful*, who, however rejoicing in hope, are sensitive to the heavy and weary weight of tragic suffering in the world, who can weep with those who weep; the *meek* as over against the aggressive so often hailed as successful; the *hungry and thirsty* yearners for righteousness who are ravenous to eat and drink God; the *merciful* who desire to do more for others than they are compelled to do; the *pure in heart* who alone have the vision of God; the *peacemakers*, not the makers of war who would change the prayer into "Thy Kingdom come with fife and drum; Thy will be done with the Gatling gun"; the *persecuted for righteousness' sake* who "walk uncowed by fear or favour of the crowd."

One sees at once that it is His own character, His very spirit, which is reflected in these Beatitudes. It is as if He said, "Blessed are they that follow me!"

2. And what is *my* spirit? Does it correspond to His? Is mine a blessed life? Do I suffer any scorn or ridicule for His sake, because I will not be conformed to the spirit of this world? Do I bear the meekness of a gentleman of Christ? Is my strength as the strength of ten because my heart is pure? Do I love my neighbor as myself? Am I sacrificing much of anything "to fill up the sufferings of Christ"?

The biographer of St. Martin of Tours tells how once the Evil One appeared to him, in royal robes and crowned with a diadem, claiming to be the Christ. The saint replied, "I

will not believe that I see the return of Christ until He comes bearing the wounds which He suffered on the Cross." Commenting on this story, John Henry Newman says, "Many spirits are abroad, more are issuing from the pit; the credentials which they display are the precious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, look hard at them with Martin, in silence, and ask them for the print of the nails."



Saturday

APRIL 13

### THE SCOPE OF THE KINGDOM

READINGS: St. Matthew 24:4-14; Revelation, chapters 21 and 22; St. John, chapter 17.

*This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*—St. Matthew 24:14.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS FOR *all* MEN. JESUS IS THE UNIVERSAL Christ. Within His fellowship there is “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” St. Peter, in a controversy which rocked the early Church, insisted that one must be circumcised first in order to become a Christian. Had his view prevailed, Christianity would have been merely a Jewish sect. St. Paul, however, withheld him to the face, insisting that Christ was “Lord of *all*.” St. Peter was given a vision upon the housetop of Simon the tanner in Joppa, which enlarged his conception of the reach of Christ; and the first Council of the Church, held in Jerusalem, settled once for all that the mission of the Church is for *all* men, that it transcends all racial and national lines, that it reaches out to the fulfillment of Our Lord’s prophecy that “they shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God.” (St. Luke 13:29.)

Our Lord saw the whole world as the field of redemption—all of it, every part of it, social, industrial, commercial,

domestic, personal, individual. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me," He said, "both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Out they went from the Upper Room at Pentecost, not stopping in Jerusalem until it was thoroughly converted, but sweeping forth in every direction, "preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ." Up through Samaria and Galilee, on to Antioch, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, sowing the seed, planting the Church, hastening on and on with fury of zeal, with intensity of purpose, with passion born of the Spirit's power, until the Empire capitulated, until the Cross of Jesus went up above the Eagles of Rome. Rome crashed under the barbarian assault; but Christianity captured the captors and swept up into the German forests and over into Gaul, and leaped the Channel into England, and crossed the Atlantic with the pioneer adventurers in a New World. Her missionaries moved eastward, too, and southward, into Egypt and India, and eventually over the walls into China.

Whatever one may say of the Christian Church, it can never be denied that hers has been in every century a great missionary enterprise. And always, now in one tongue, now in another, the record of the missionary is that of the intrepid, apostolic St. Paul. "I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God," "expounding and testifying the Kingdom of God, persuading men concerning Jesus from morning till evening."

A Church that is not aflame with a world vision of the Kingdom is a contradiction in terms. The life of the Church is Jesus and He belongs to all men everywhere. Once in a while, even yet, we hear some one say, "I do not believe in missions. They have their own religions in China, in India, in Japan, in Africa; and I have mine. Why force my religion upon them?" The answer is obvious: "Who told you it was

*your religion?* It is *Christ's* religion; it is His Kingdom, and He belongs to the world!" God is not a white Occidental. Jesus is not the private possession of any race or people. The Church is not "made in America" nor in Europe. "God so loved *the world*," says St. John, "that He gave His only begotten Son!" And had it not been for this international, inter-racial reach and search of the Church, we who boast ourselves civilized and Christian would have been, like our ancestors, savage worshipers of brutal and bestial gods!

The missionary of the Church does not deride or disparage the religions of others. He respects them. He knows that India breathes religion, that she is "God-intoxicated." He acknowledges with thankfulness the spirit of the Chinese, their love of peace, their respect for old age, their patience and gentleness and thrift. He admires the spirit of loyalty which dominates Japan. He is conscious of the wrong that black Africa has endured, and that with a buoyancy and light-heartedness which puts the whites to shame. He has no desire to thrust upon these peoples a merely *Western* religion. He only knows that Jesus Christ fits the needs of the human cry for God; and he can never forget the marching orders: "All power is given unto Me. Go ye therefore and teach all nations!"

There are nearly a million and a half Episcopalians in the United States; and two-thirds of them give not one cent to "preach the Kingdom and heal the sick." Thousands of others are content with a tiny weekly offering to the great missionary enterprise, an offering equal to the cost of a newspaper, a package of cigarettes, a seat at the movies. The Cross means sacrifice. How dare I feed upon His broken body and poured-out blood if my body feels no discipline of denial for the sake of the Kingdom and if my blood flows evenly in veins of selfish complacency?

What have I done to spread the Kingdom? He said to me "Come," and I came. He said to me "Follow!"; I claim to

be a follower. He says to me, "Go into all the world!" Do I go? Do I make it possible for one to go to represent me?

I heard Him call  
Come, follow,—that was all.  
My gold grew dim,  
My soul went after Him.  
I rose and followed, that was all.  
Who would not follow if he heard His call?

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HOLY WEEK

*THE PASSION AND TRIUMPH OF  
THE REVEALING CHRIST*

In the Epistle chosen for Palm Sunday, the Church gives us a rule for our observance of the Holy Week. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 2:5). The mind of our Lord is what we must keep in our minds. We must do more than watch, or sympathize, or mourn; more even than praise Him for our redemption. We must let His mind be "in us"; we must reflect on it, in order that we may reflect or reproduce it—and especially His mind in Holy Week and on the Cross. For in that final week we have a wonderful and very moving epitome or summary of His whole life. On the Cross He lived, before He died, for several hours. Those hours, and the seven words He spoke, reveal His character, His motive, His aim, His very soul. Reading His mind in these supreme moments of His life, marking it, learning it, making it our own, we shall spend a veritable Holy Week, for we shall be spending it with Him and He with us.

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*Monday*

APRIL 15

### THE MEANING OF OUR LORD'S PASSION

*Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end.—St. John 13:1.*

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—St. John 15:13.*

**P**ICTURE OUR LORD'S LIFE (1) AS AN UNCEASING, AND (2) as an increasing, outpouring of love.

(1) He loved unto the end, that is, *up to the last*: all the time, every moment, every one. Recall, as illustrations, the Roman centurion (St. Luke 7:1-10); the widow of Nain (St. Luke 7:11-15); Mary (Magdalene?) (St. Luke 7:36-50); Jairus and his daughter (St. Luke 8:41-56); Lazarus and his sisters (St. John 11:1-46, especially verses 5, 35, 36).

(2) He loved unto the end: that is, *up to the limit*; holding nothing back, giving Himself more and more fully and freely to those whose hearts were opened to Him; the current of His love reaching full flood on Calvary. He laid down His life for His friends.

Consider the meaning of the Passion. In common speech "passion" is a word of evil omen. It tells of the worst in human nature, not of the best. It brings to mind images of anger, lust, hatred, envy, greed. Passion, with us, must be sternly held in check. May we then use the word of our Lord? Are we right in saying that there was passion in His most holy life? Yes; the Church has always thought so. Her noblest prayers and hymns and praises are "in remembrance

of His passion." We plead for pardon "by His passion." Clearly the word is used in two very different contexts; it describes the grossness of man's sin; it celebrates the perfection of Christ's love. But in using it of Him we must free it from its usual association. We must give it its true meaning, lifting it, so to say, from the devil up to God. This needs some careful thinking. Just what does passion mean when used of our Lord?

Consider the intensity of passion. Intensity is what gives the word its meaning. Passion sweeps men away, so that they see only one thing and will pay any price, run any risk, for it. Men's strongest desires are apt to be for evil. So passion sweeps men into sin. It was the opposite with our Lord. His consuming desire was for His Father's will, for man's salvation. But it was passion none the less—the strongest, as it was the holiest, passion ever felt or known. That is why the Church clings to the word in thinking of, and praying to, her Lord. And it is this passion of Christ's love that we need to realize. If we could once face and feel it fully, with open heart and mind, our coldness, slackness, carelessness, disloyalty, would shrivel up before it. Our own experience of passion may help us here. The heat of our anger, the madness of our lusts, the fierceness of our hatreds—these may serve as gauges of the *pressure* of Christ's love. That is how He loves us—only much more than that.

Consider the relation of suffering to passion. They are not the same. There is suffering without passion, though with men suffering often rouses the passion of rebellion. There is passion without suffering, for, if passion gain its end, there is no suffering, but only satisfaction. Passion means pain only if it is thwarted, turned back upon itself, cheated of its aim. Our Lord's suffering was not inherent in His passion. Had men been without sin, had they returned His love, His passion would have brought joy, not pain.

There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents. The cause of our Lord's suffering was not in the passion of His love but in man's refusal of His love. Man's sin does that which nothing else in the whole universe can do. It thwarts God's will; it resists His love; it turns our Lord's passion into pain. As the passion of His love passes our knowledge, so the intensity of suffering caused Him by our refusal of His love is beyond our thought—though we must think of it.

Consider the agony of spiritual suffering. Our Lord's suffering was chiefly spiritual. It was more the travail of His soul than of His body. Through His life on earth, up to the Holy Week, we may think of Him as free from bodily disease and suffering, as He was free from sin. Strong, vigorous, flawless health of body as of soul seems implied almost of necessity in His perfect human life. Yet "He was a man of sorrows." No moment passed without the pain of love defied, despised, ignored. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (St. John 5:40). Therein lay His agony. We find this hard to realize. With us suffering means physical pain, rather than spiritual. The "pains of hell" which shock us into disbelief are the pains of flames and worms; not the agony of separation from our God with most of us, the body is the center of our lives; the soul is the slave or servant of the body; sometimes its mere shadow. But this is to be blind to facts. It is to believe a lie. The soul, not the body, is the real and final seat of suffering. And our Lord suffered in His soul—and suffers now—because of us.

Grant, O Lord, that we, meditating on Thy most holy passion, may be enabled by Thy grace to take out of Thy way every obstacle to the free entrance of Thy love.

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Tuesday

APRIL 16

### THE PASSION IN REJECTION

*When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.—St. Luke 19:41-42.*

*When Israel was a child, then I loved him. . . . How shall I give thee up?—Hosea 11:1, 8.*

#### **P**ICTURE OUR LORD WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM:

(1) Moved by its external beauty: "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth" (Psalm 48:2).

(2) Recalling its high spiritual privilege and glorious mission; "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Romans 9:4-5). "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (St. John 1:11).

(3) Sorrowing above all that, in rejecting Him, it had sealed its own doom. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself" (Hosea 13:9). "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (St. Matthew 23:38).

Consider that to reject Christ is more than a negative refusal of His claim. Men do not reject Christ with nothing else in mind. There is always a reason for rejection. There is always a preference, expressed or implied, for some one, or something else. Christ is balanced, consciously or unconsciously, against some other claimant "the lust of the flesh" (self-indulgence), "the lust of the eyes" (covetousness), "the

pride of life" (self-sufficiency) (I St. John 2:16), and is found wanting. There is always a choice, a decision one way or the other. There is always a judgment going on, pronounced, not by an arbitrary judge, but by ourselves on ourselves: "We will not have this man to reign over us" (St. Luke 19:14). "Light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light" (St. John 3:19). To love darkness is to reject Christ.

Consider that rejection of Christ has different causes and shows itself in different ways.

(a) It comes, almost automatically, from "hardness of heart" (St. Mark 3:5). In the Parable of the Sower (St. Luke 8:5-15) our Lord compares the hard heart to a beaten path on which seed falls, to lie exposed on the impenetrable surface, carried away by passing birds. Hardness of heart is spiritual blindness. To the physically blind the world of nature: its light, color, beauty; sun, moon, stars, woods, waters, is as though it were not. So to the spiritually blind, God: Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, is unreal, non-existent, a foolish fancy. The soul's eye has gone blind. "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (St. Matthew 6:23). Hardness of heart leads easily, as in the first Holy Week, to scorn, contempt, mocking, reviling. These are common symptoms. And the heart grows hard by a creeping paralysis rather than by acute attack. No one is immune.

(b) Rejection is the final stage of an unstable character. In the same parable of the Sower, our Lord compares unstable souls to shallow soil. On top it is soft and broken up. But just below the surface is a rocky ledge through which no roots can penetrate. In shallow soil young plants spring up only to wither away in the sun's heat. So these unstable souls "receive the word with joy but have no root in themselves." They are easily moved; as easily removed. Former

claims and interests, old habits of thought and life, come back; and their devotion dies. Such are communicants who have lapsed from prayer and preparation. Such are "converts" who relapse into a worse state than before "conversion." The habit of a shifting will, unless conquered by the final grace of perseverance, hardens into the habit of rejection. Souls must have roots, else they will wither, even though the light of Christ shines on them.

(c) Rejection is the final issue of a divided heart. Once more, in the story of the Sower, our Lord pictures the fate of good seed falling into soil where it finds other seeds, of thorns or weeds, mixed in. These last are strong and quick in growth. The good seed is choked both above the ground and below. Its leaves and buds are cut off from light and air. Its roots are cramped. It lacks what it must have for growth. There can be but one end. So our Lord warns us that a double allegiance is impossible. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (St. Matthew 6:24). We may fool ourselves into thinking that Christ is really our Lord and "mammon" merely incidental. But the sure end of compromise is that "mammon" gets the throne. "Cares, riches, pleasures of this life": these are the thorns. Either these are rooted up and the soil cleansed, or our Lord is crowded out.

From all blindness of heart;  
 From pride, vain glory and hypocrisy;  
 From all the deceits of the world, the flesh  
     and the devil;  
 From hardness of heart and contempt of  
     Thy word and commandment,  
 Good Lord, deliver us.—(THE LITANY.)

O Thou lover of souls, save me from the guilt of crucifying  
 Thee afresh, and putting Thee to open shame.



*Wednesday*

APRIL 17

THE PASSION IN DENIAL

*Peter said unto him, I am ready to go with thee to prison and to death.—St. Luke 22:33.*

*But he began to curse and to swear, saying I know not this man of whom ye speak.—St. Mark 14:71.*

*And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. . . . And Peter went out and wept bitterly.—St. Luke 22:61, 62.*

**P**ICTURE PETER IN THE DARK COURT OF THE HIGH PRIEST's house, cold, tired, confused, unnerved; his Lord betrayed, arrested, doomed; he himself in instant, unknown danger.

2. Picture accusations, one after another, sneering, hostile, threatening: "Thou wast with Jesus of Nazareth"; "This is one of them"; "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?"
3. Picture his mad denials, scared out of his wits.
4. Picture his tears when Jesus looked at him.

Consider that it was fear which drove Peter to denial. Fear, drowning out all else, set loose the primitive instinct of self-preservation. The storm raging around his Lord had involved him. Reviling, prison, even death; no longer were these imaginations easily set aside in the untroubled confidence of untried loyalty. Now they were threatening, pressing on him. He was all alone. There was no one to help. With Jesus he had always felt safe. In that fierce storm on Galilee, when Jesus woke the peril passed. That had always been the way. But now Jesus was in as bad a case as he himself. Jesus could not help. He must help himself; he must

get clear at any cost. The mounting emphasis of his denial shows him utterly unnerved. Love, loyalty, truth, honor—all go by the board, driven out by fear.

Consider that Peter's denial was a sudden impulse. It was wrung from him on the instant. He was caught unawares. He had no time to think. What was quite evident was that his discipleship was going to cost him something, perhaps his very life. He was quite unprepared for that. Hitherto all had been privilege, elation, wonder. Each day, since Jesus called him from his fishing, had brought new proof of power, wisdom, love. It was all a wonderful new world. He had been dreaming dreams, and seeing visions of a Kingdom in which he should have a place near by the King. Now his world had crashed in ruins. There was nothing left. He must do something quickly. He must act instantly, though it meant acting blindly, desperately. His denial broke from him, an unthinking, instinctive cry for safety.

Consider that Peter, in denying his Lord, denied his own true self. He knew better. He really loved Jesus. Just the other day he had cried out: "Though I die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." And he had meant it. His love for Jesus was the strongest emotion, the ruling motive, of his life. Jesus discerned in Peter a gift of steadfast love. It was undeveloped, untried, but it was there. "Simon" was to grow up as "Peter," the rock man. Yet, when the crisis came, it was the old unregenerate Simon who cursed and swore at the mention of his Master's name. Then Jesus looked at him. His love for his Lord came flooding back. His tears were tears of true repentance; that he, who had sworn to love, had sorely wounded the great Lover. He had denied his Lord. But he still loved Him and he wanted Him to know it. That was why he wept.

Consider that Our Lord's passion in denial was, and

is, the pain of finding professed friends failing under trial. Open enemies can be identified and discounted. Secret traitors are at least consistent in their faithlessness. But all one has to count on are one's friends. If they fail at need, love is wounded at the heart. Peter had special privilege and honor, a special mission. But he had no more love poured out upon him than is given day by day to the smallest and humblest member of the Lord's Fellowship. "Communicants of the Church" are "Friends of the Lord." We are sworn to love Him. And at least at times we have known real love for Him. Has fear driven us into denial? And have we felt the Lord's eye resting on us?

Lord pray for me, as once thou didst for Peter, that my strength fail not, and, by thy grace, grant me not to count my life dear unto myself save as I may give it wholly to thee, not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

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Thursday

APRIL 18

THE PASSION IN BETRAYAL

*It is not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonour. . . . It was even thou, my companion . . . mine own familiar friend . . . who did also eat of my bread.—Psalms 55:12, 14; 41:9. Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?—St. Luke 22:48.*

**P**ICTURE THE CONDUCT AND CHARACTER OF JUDAS:

- (1) Moved by admiration rather than affection; no trace of personal devotion; pleased and proud to be at the center of a great movement; counting on some personal advantage or advancement;
- (2) Able, ambitious, shrewd, executive; holding the common purse (St. John 12:6) *i.e.*, acting as treasurer;
- (3) Bitterly disappointed at the popular rejection of his Leader, which meant the collapse of his own hopes;
- (4) Determined to save something from the wreck; money would help him for the moment; favorable notice by the authorities might follow.

Consider that the motive in this betrayal is desire for personal gain. The potential traitor is drawn to his Lord by the hope of getting something from Him. The Lord is to be of service to His followers; not they to Him, save at a price. Discipleship must be paid for. If payment in some kind is not forthcoming, obligation ceases and betrayal is in order. Treachery takes different forms. The traitor may set his heart on one of many prizes: worldly gain, social or

political advantage; physical well-being; selfish spiritual comfort and security. But in all cases the process and progress of treachery are similar. The will moves to the same end. God exists for man; not man for God. That is the traitor's creed. When things go well, he is found among the faithful. When things go wrong for him, he blames God for it, and is moved to seek reprisals. He is on the brink of a betrayal.

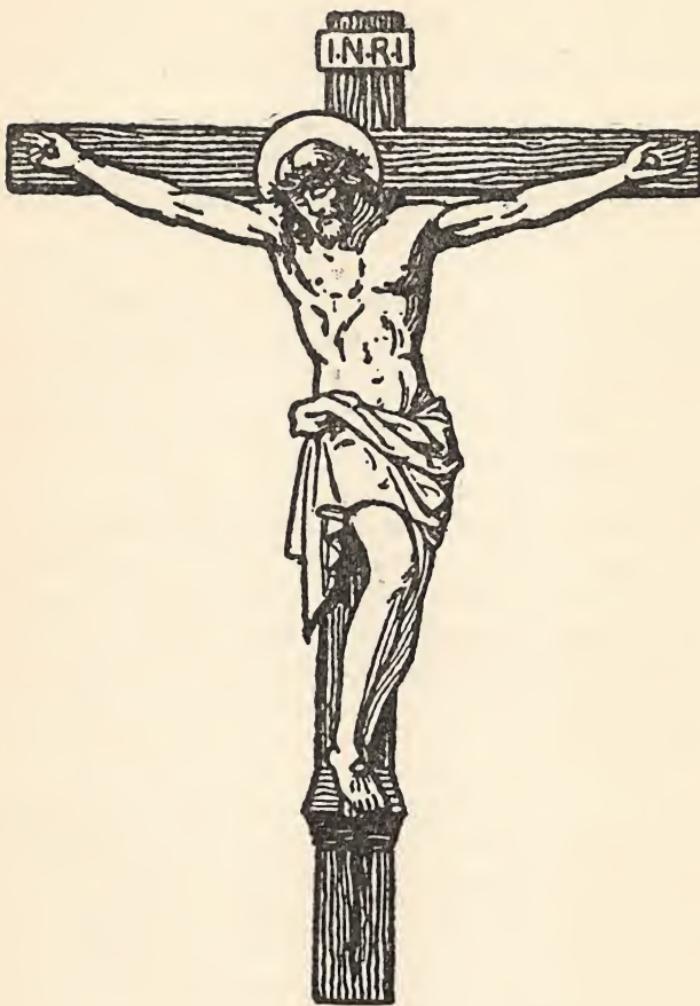
Consider that betrayal is deliberate. It is not a sudden impulse under stress of strong emotion. It is cold, calculating, premeditated. This is what distinguishes betrayal from denial; what marks Judas off from Peter. Judas seems to have been at heart a traitor from the first. His own interests are always paramount. Had Jesus not been rejected by the Jews, had He come into an earthly Kingdom, Judas would still have been at heart a traitor, willing at any time to sacrifice his Lord's interests to his own. The money he received, the kiss he gave, were not the essence of his treachery. They were but outward signs of his inward spiritual habit, of his fixed cast of mind and bent of will. He would serve his Master for what he could get out of Him. That made him the traitor that he was, as it has made, and is still making, many others.

Consider that treachery is "an inside job." Enemies may attack openly from without. Traitors must work secretly from within. The traitor must know the character and habits of his victim. The genius of the traitor lies in choosing the most favorable moment: when there is least risk of suspicion or resistance; when confidence and fellowship are full and free. It was from the Last Supper that Judas, "having received the sop, went immediately out, and it was night" (St. John 13:30). In the Consecration Prayer in our Communion service we date the institution of the Sacrament by the treachery of Judas. At every celebration we rehearse the fact that it was "the night in which He was

betrayed" that our Lord "took bread and, when He had given thanks, He brake it." The surest opportunity for treachery is still at the altar. Having received the Sacrament, many of us go "immediately out," meeting the chief priests of our world, social, political, economic. "What will ye give me and I will deliver Him unto you?" (St. Matthew 26:15).

Consider that the sin of treachery is violation of trust. "It is required in stewards (*i.e.*, trustees) that a man be found faithful" (Corinthians 4:2). Even in these days of falling moral standards, we still recognize the obligations of trustees. High treason is a capital offense. Mishandling of trust funds is a felony. The law lies hard upon the traitor because keeping faith is the foundation of society. Every social institution—home, friendship, government, business, and commerce—breaks down when faith is broken. To Judas was committed the greatest of all imaginable trusts. He openly and publicly accepted it; but his life gave it the lie. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (St. John 6:64). "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man had he not been born" (St. Matthew 26:24). So much for Judas. How about ourselves? What does our Lord trust us with? What does He trust us for? Have we kept faith?

By thy good grace, O Lord, so purify my love for Thee from all self-seeking, that I may offer and present unto Thee myself, my soul and body, to be reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice to Thy greater glory.



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*Good Friday*

April 19

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS

THE FIRST WORD

THE SELF-FORGETFULNESS OF LOVE

*And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*  
—St. Luke 24:33, 34.

PICTURE OUR LORD'S SELF-FORGETFULNESS AT THE MOMENT of extremest agony. Probably this first word from the Cross comes as they left the Cross, with His body nailed to it, drop into the socket which held it upright. It was the moment when ordinary criminals filled the air with curses. Our Lord prays for those who make Him suffer and finds excuses for them.

Consider Our Lord's effortless detachment from, forgetfulness of, self. To us it seems a sort of miracle; something too much for human nature; certainly beyond our reach. Pain, when it touches us, brings self quickly to the surface. Even a slight discomfort throws us out of gear; demoralizes us; excuses us from duties and engagements. That is our habit; it is an instinct with us; it works almost automatically. And it is habit which explains both our own selfishness in pain and our Lord's selflessness. Our habit is to think first of self; afterwards, of God and others. His habit is to

love, and love is always self-forgetful. He is loving "to the end." His love reflects not only God's love towards men, but God's love in men. That is why His life is perfect, because "to love is the perfect of the verb to live," and He loves perfectly. At the crises of life, habit always tells. Under strain, habits give us away, show us as we really are. So with our Lord. His intercession for His murderers, as they were killing Him, reveals the passion of His love in clearest light, in fullest force. Yet it is effortless, spontaneous.

Consider the breadth of our Lord's love. He begins with His enemies; begins at a point which our love, even our prayer, hardly ever reaches. He is moved, not by the wrong done to Him, but by the sin of His persecutors against God and so against themselves. The wrong they are doing Him—the agony, the torture—gives them a special claim on Him. He is the occasion, however innocent, of their sin. His intercession, His plea for them, will therefore be the more effective. It seems to have been this revelation of the passion of our Lord's love which won the thief on the next Cross, as perhaps it won others in the crowd. Yet it was nothing new. It was His habit. "They that are whole have no need for a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (St. Mark 2:17). The shepherd seeking the one lost sheep, the woman searching for the one lost coin—these are more than parables. They tell the story of His life. The priceless value of a single soul; the tragedy of one lost soul; the passion of love pursuing that it may save—where can there be any room left for resentment, for enmity? It is natural, inevitable, that He should pray, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Do I pray for my enemies, or for those I think are such? Do I honestly desire their good? Do I feel they have a special

claim on me? Or do I harbor resentment, easily take offense, rejoice, even if secretly, in their misfortune? St. Stephen learned the lesson from His Lord (Acts 7:60). Have I tried to have this mind in me?

Thou Lover of souls, Who in Thine agony didst pray for those who caused it, give me Thine own self-forgetful, all-embracing love; the pure-hearted desire that all men may be saved and come to know Thee as Thou art.

Lord, have mercy on my enemies as on myself. *We knew not what we did in sinning against Thee.*

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THE SECOND WORD

THE GENEROSITY OF LOVE

*And one of the malefactors railed on Him . . . but the other answering rebuked him . . . and said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him . . . Today shall thou be with Me in paradise.—St. Luke 23:39-43.*

PICTURE THE EFFECT ON THE THIEF OF OUR LORD'S PRESENCE; so close by, on a cross like his; "numbered among the transgressors" (St. Mark 15:28), just as he was; yet so far removed; so different from anyone ever known or imagined; different in look, bearing, mind, word (he had heard Him praying for His murderers). The wonder of it overcame him, touched a hidden spring, released a new impulse, changed the current of his life in its last moments. "Lord" (he must call Him that, hardly knowing why) "Lord, remember me!"

Picture Our Lord's quickness and generosity in answering; not as some great one granting favors; not even saying, as He had said to others, "Go, and sin no more," but welcoming the poor outcast as a friend, taking him home with Him just as he was. "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Consider the meaning and virtue of true penitence. There must be something almost divine in it if it meet with such divine response. In truth, there is in it a spark of the divine, for it means a longing, a thirst of soul for God. Penitence is not primarily concerned with self or even with sin. It

hates sin with holy hatred, not out of fear of punishment but because sin separates from God, and the penitent wants God. His desire of soul is not for goodness, but for God Himself. Love of God has become his compelling, ruling motive. "My sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up" (Psalm 40:15); and what he wants is to be able to look up to God. It is because true penitence means love of God, at least in its first stage, that it is a fruitful seed. God can do wonders with it; seeing the end in the beginning; dealing with the penitent, not as he is, but as he is becoming. That is why God opens His arms and takes the penitent, whoever, wherever he may be, home to Himself. But we must not deceive ourselves. There is a spurious penitence, especially on deathbeds. It has been well said that *one* genuine last-minute repentance is on record, that we may not despair; but *only one*, that we may not presume. Even our Lord's generosity of love is beaten back by counterfeits. Real penitence alone will take us straight to Him; bring Him straight to us, just as we are.

Consider Our Lord's amazing generosity. There is a common form of thought which treats God's love as merely easy-going, benevolent good nature. He does not wish to be hard on us. He is ready to let us off quite easily, not caring much in any case. That is sheer blasphemy against His holy Name, as well as an insult to our human nature, even at its lowest. The penitent sees sin as a gulf which separates two lovers; a gulf which he himself has made; but a gulf which he longs to cross, not primarily to save himself, but rather that he may get to God. If God sees that in any human heart, He can work His miracle of pardon. He is so great a lover because with His gift He gives Himself, even as our Lord, by one great word, took the robber to Himself. Our Lord was known and derided as "a friend of publicans and sinners" (St. Luke 7:34). That was what disturbed the Phari-

sees. What must they have thought, if they were present, of that final proof of friendship for the outcast there on the Cross? But that is the way He always deals with penitents, in the overflowing generosity of love.

Have I ever fairly faced the question of my own repentance? Do I know what it means to hate sin because I love my Lord? Do I realize how much He hates my sin because it keeps me from Him? Do I imagine that there are other ways than penitence by which I can let His love into my life?

Have I "His mind" in welcoming returning penitents? Do I invite them to be "with me" in church, at communion, at my home, in my household? Is the "fellowship of the Name" a real thing to me? Do I love all who love the Lord?

O Loving Lord, Who on the Cross didst take the repentant robber to Thyself, give me such sorrow for my sins as may fit me also to be received by Thee, and let Thy mind of generous love be in me, that I may love all who in penitence love Thee, for Thy sake and to Thy glory.

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THE THIRD WORD

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF LOVE

*When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto her, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.—St. John 19:26, 27.*

PICTURE THE VIRGIN AND ST. JOHN AT THE CROSS; His Mother and His dearest friend, coming there unnoticed; staying there, “standing by,” as the curious crowd drifted away.

Picture the Virgin’s silent sorrow; none so close to Him as she; none so self-effacing; “the sword piercing her soul” (St. Luke 2:35).

Picture the young disciple, whom Jesus loved, “which also leaned on His breast at supper” (St. John 21:20), longing to bring relief, to ease the pain, to prove his love.

Consider our Lord’s thoughtfulness, still entirely detached from self. After praying for the soldiers, and welcoming the penitent, He comes home, to His nearest and dearest. His eye rests on them, is filled with them. He thinks of them and for them. He feels their sorrow. He plans their future. “To His Mother He gives another son. To His disciple He gives a sacred charge”—to care for His Mother in His stead, for His sake.

Consider how our Lord blessed and sanctified the home. His Incarnation is the central point, not only of human history, but of all time. Yet none the less it was “a family affair.” He came into our world as member of a family.

He grew up at home. For thirty years, of His thirty-three, He lived at home. His family is rightly called the "Holy Family." But in His sight and by His will, every human family is holy. His home was the scene of His own preparation for His mission. The home is still the foundation of His Kingdom. It is the place where His citizens are trained; where the love of God is "shed abroad." If the home goes, all hope of Christian civilization goes with it, torn up by its roots. On the Cross the Lord thought of His home.

Consider how our Lord inspired and ennobled human friendship. He was in all points human. Nothing human was alien to Him. He redeemed humanity by redeeming human institutions; not the family alone, but friendship also. He made room for friends in His own life. He had a special place for His "beloved disciple." To him as to no one else He opened the secret of God's love. To him He gave the most sacred gift which He as man could give: His Virgin Mother. With Him human friendship reached its highest point. He gives it to us as a most precious prize. He has taught us how to make and keep our friends. He has shown us what friendship costs in thoughtfulness and sacrifice. He has proved how richly all its cost is compensated. On the Cross our Lord was thoughtful for His friend.

Have I betrayed my home? Broken or strained it by my selfishness? Have I been impatient, critical, censorious, unloving? Have I made husband, wife, father, mother, sisters, brothers, children, to offend? Are there amends which I might make, for Jesus' sake?

Have I been selfish in my friendships, asking much and giving little? Have I been exacting, thoughtless, forgetful, slothful, tardy in sympathy, grudging in sacrifice? Can I be a better friend, for Jesus' sake?

Lord, as I recall Thy loving thoughtfulness even on the

Cross, help me to "behold," in a new light, the members of my family, my relations and my friends, whom in love and wisdom Thou hast given me. Teach me and strengthen me to fulfill my obligations to them, in Thy Name and for Thy sake.

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THE FOURTH WORD

THE LOYALTY OF LOVE

*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—St. Matthew 27:45, 46.*

PICTURE OUR LORD'S HUMAN AGONY OF SOUL. THE MYSTERY of the Atonement is beyond us. We know it to be true. It is attested by multitudes in Heaven, in Paradise, on earth. "He made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" (Prayer Book Service for Holy Communion). Now, on the Cross He is making that atonement for us all. He is doing it alone, for He alone could do it. We believe it. We praise God for it. We lift up our hearts in adoration. But we must keep silence, for we know only in part. It passes our knowledge. None the less there is a human side, a revelation of "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." That we must think of, and, with His help, make our own, namely, His loyalty of love. At the breaking-point, under intolerable strain, with darkness clouding His soul as outward darkness blotted out the land; still he holds on. In His spiritual desolation He can still say: "My God! My God!"

Consider the "dark night" of the soul. Even with our Lord, it was real darkness, real desolation. The world had turned against Him. All parties, all classes; government, the church, the common people, the rabble, even His own dis-

ciples—all had rejected and disowned Him. Now God Himself was hiding His face from Him, seemed to have cast Him out. "I am not alone because the Father is with me" (St. John 16:32). So He had said. Up to now that had carried Him, sustained Him. But now that, too, was gone. In this intolerable loneliness, what was He to think, to say, to do? It was His supreme test as man, in our flesh; the final onset of temptation. Would He give way? Would the strain be too great? A cry broke from Him; a human cry: literally human, for He was quoting from the Psalm (22:1). He was taking on Himself the agony of all the spiritually desolate, of all who have known the "dark night" of the soul, since the world began. He was "tasting death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9), the death of the soul as of the body. And He won out; came through victorious; never lost hold. His victory is presaged in His very cry: "My God! My God!" Thou hast forsaken me. Yet thou art My God.

What does faith mean at its core? What is its hallmark? Not intellectual conviction, though faith, if exercised, brings conviction more sure than the certainties of science. Not emotion, though, as faith takes root and grows, emotion, love of the heart, comes to crown, reward, and glorify it. Peace, joy, assurance of safety, of communion; these are the fruits, and not the roots, of faith. Faith at its heart means loyalty. It has its root in the "good ground" of a surrendered will. "Lo! I come . . . that I should fulfill Thy will, O my God; I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:9, 10). That is the authentic cry of faith. It recks not of the weather. It is thankful for the sunlight. It is not discouraged, or halted, by the clouds. It knows that the sun is always there; that clouds will pass. Even the clouds can be turned to good account. They put faith to the proof, making it stronger, more trustworthy, more precious in God's sight, which is just what God intends, and hopes for, when He allows the clouds to gather; when out

of love He hides His Face. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15). At our Lord's Baptism, He heard a voice saying: "Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (St. Luke 3:22). How much clearer must that voice have sounded in His ears when, in the thick darkness of His soul, He, as man, kept faith; when He, as man, proved His perfect loyalty of love.

What is my faith like? What is it good for? What does God think of it? Has it been tested? Has it stood the test? When I am cold and God seems far away, do I give up my prayers, and my communions? Do I wait till I "feel like it"? When sorrows, losses, disappointments come, do I rebel, blame it on God, call Him unjust, unloving? Or do I doubt my doubts rather than doubt God? If the Cross comes to me, am I prepared to cry, "My God! My God!" and to hold on in loyalty?

Lord Jesus, by Thy cry of desolation, by the darkness of Thy soul, Thou hast made a way for me through the deep waters. Grant me not to falter as I follow Thee.

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THE FIFTH WORD

THE PATIENCE OF LOVE

*After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, saith, I thirst.—St. John 19:28.*

PICTURE OUR LORD PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY RELAXED after extreme tension. So far He has patiently endured, giving no sign of physical suffering; absorbed in healing, helping others; proving His perfect will of sacrifice. But "all things are now accomplished." He is man; in our flesh, like us in all things save our sinfulness. His body is like our bodies, only more perfect, more exquisitely sensitive. And He is not ashamed of His body. Rather it is part of His mission to redeem the body, that it may become the eternal vehicle and instrument of spirit; that so the whole of manhood, not a part only, may be saved. Before He dies He reminds us once more of His body. He bears the whole cost of our redemption, in body, soul, and spirit. He suffers pain as we do, more than we do. He wishes us to remember it of Him, for our comfort. He wishes us to remember it in others, for His sake. *Jesus saith, "I thirst."*

Consider our Lord's endurance of pain. His soul poured itself out in love to man; in faithfulness to God. Up to this point, up to the fifth word, did we not know that He was on the Cross, we should get no hint of it from Him. So far His physical agony has been ignored. Now, for the first time, He speaks of it. The thirst in crucifixion is proverbial. It is perhaps the worst of all the suffering; and He acknowledges it, accepts it, asks for relief. Here is no fanatic, con-

tradicting common sense and reason, denying the reality of pain. Here is no Stoic, steeling himself to carry on and make no sign. Here is One, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, ready to confess that He is in pain and wants to be relieved. Perhaps none of the words from the Cross brings Him so close to the humanity which He shares with us as does this fifth word. It is supremely natural. He said, "I thirst," even as we should have done. If He is as near to us as that, perhaps He will take hold of us and lift us up, out of our pain, to the level of His own self-forgetfulness, generosity, thoughtfulness, loyalty. We rightly think of Him as *supernatural*; else He could not lift up our natures to the level of His own perfected humanity. But He was no *unnatural* superman. He said, "I thirst."

Consider the holy sanction which He gives to our own service for the relief of pain and suffering. He came to minister, not to be ministered to. Yet, once at least, at the high point of His whole life, at the very moment of His supreme self-sacrifice, He asks for human ministry to ease His pain. And in the persons of His fellow-sufferers, here and now, in our midst, He is still asking for it. Recall His great parable of final judgment, and remember where He draws the line between the "sheep" and "goats." "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren (the hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick, prisoners) ye have done it unto Me" (St. Matthew 25:40).

Am I prepared, am I accustomed, to endure pain if there are duties calling me, opportunities for service given me?

Is my heart soft and sympathetic in the midst of the "rivers of pain" which are running unceasingly about me? Or do I shut my eyes and ears, and let the "agencies" and the "institutions," take my place in ministering relief, as the soldiers gave the Lord the vinegar on Calvary?

*Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.* St. John 11:3.

O Thou who didst suffer in patience on the Cross, give me Thy patience in my suffering and sickness. Comfort and relieve all sufferers and help me to remember them as "being myself also in the body."

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THE SIXTH WORD

THE FAITHFULNESS OF LOVE

*When Jesus had received the vinegar He said, It is finished.*  
—St. John 19:30.

PICTURE OUR LORD'S FAITHFULNESS ON THE CROSS. HE WAS “faithful to Him that appointed Him” (Hebrews 3:2), up to the very end. “I do always those things that please Him” (St. John 8:29). So He had said. He gave final proof of it, the “finishing touch,” upon the Cross. Every agony had been endured; every pressure of temptation beaten back; every chance taken for loving ministry to men. Now “it is finished.” That was His cry of victory. But He was not thinking of Himself. He was not rejoicing in His own success. He was rejoicing that His Father had been glorified; that His Father’s will had been accomplished. Faithful at all times, in every detail; nothing shirked; nothing omitted; nothing wasted; His trust discharged to the last letter; now He offers to His Father His life-work as man, in our flesh, for our redemption, perfectly fulfilled. “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (St. John 17:4).

Consider the faithfulness of our Lord’s love. As a boy of twelve He had felt the pressure of His mission: “I must be about my Father’s business” (St. Luke 2:49). That was His rule of life. His Baptism marked another stage. His Temptation followed, testing His will and purpose. He came through it victorious. His ministry from day to day was guided by His Father’s will. His miracles, or “signs,” were under the same law; not breaches of the law, as we ignorantly fancy; He worked them each at the appointed hour (St. John 2:4).

Finally came the crisis in the Garden, the sweat of blood, the great self-surrender: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done" (St. Luke 22:42). This sixth word from the Cross gathers it all up. He renders His complete account; no fault, no flaw, no least omission. "It is finished."

Consider what that "finished work" means for us. His mission was unique—to save the world. None but He could do it. "He only could unlock the gate of Heaven and let us in." But what He did *for* us, He now wills to do *in* us and *through* us. The world for which He died is to be redeemed, but not as we stand by and watch Him on the Cross; we are to bear the Cross and follow Him. We are ourselves redeemed in so far as He is using us to redeem others. And for each of us this is to be a life-work; not mere spasmodic efforts, occasional "good works," subscriptions, offerings, communions, church activities. It is to be a daily looking up for orders; a daily doing of His will. "Every man's life is a plan of God"; so a wise man puts it. In every calling, on every level; in every occupation; in all duties, interests, pleasures, every man's life is planned by God. And love, if it be faithful, is always ready, at attention. "Here am I." At death the chance of finishing our God-given work on earth will have come and gone. "The night cometh" (St. John 9:4). God grant that of *something* at least done for Him, we, too, can say, "It is finished."

Have I sought guidance in choosing my vocation? In ordering my life? Have I an aim, a rule? Do I know why I am here? Have I tried to find out? In my prayers, do I ask God what He would have me do?

Have I undertaken anything wholly for love of my Lord? Have I finished it?

Lord, Thou wast faithful unto death. Grant me some measure of that faithful endurance in love, which glorified Thy Father and saves the world. Let me, too, endure with Thee unto the end.

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THE SEVENTH WORD

THE TRUSTFULNESS OF LOVE

*And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said this, He gave up the ghost.—St. Luke 23:46.*

PICTURE PEACE FOLLOWING VICTORY. HE IS SPEAKING, NOT to men, but to His Father, in intimate communion. It is finished; the work is done; His mission fulfilled; His suffering over. He is going home, quietly, calmly, confidently. He breathes out His human soul to God.

Consider our Lord's childlike, confiding trustfulness as He passes to and through His death. As a child goes to sleep, so He breathes His spirit to His Father. It is perfectly in keeping with His daily, hourly habit. It is the final evidence of His peace which the world can neither give nor take away. For peace is not inconsistent with, is not contradicted by, trial, temptation, tribulation. Deep waters are unmoved by waves and winds raging on the surface. Peace means "calm at the heart of endless agitation." Our Lord's agony of soul and body has passed. The triumph of His love over all comers has been won. Now the deep current of His life bears Him on peacefully to His spirit's rest in God. And in His death, as in His life, He is completely human. Once more, in this last word, He seems to be quoting from the Psalms (31:6), finding His fellowship among the holy and humble men of heart. In our flesh He has dethroned the king of terrors. In our flesh He has put the last enemy out of the way. He dies as any man may die now that He

has led the way, breathing his soul to God as children go to sleep.

Consider how we can best prepare for death. If we make no preparation, we shall be walking in the dark, missing life's meaning. For life, not death, is the real mystery. And it is death which holds the solution of the mystery. Death throws a brilliant light on life if we have eyes to see it. It is not really for death we must prepare, but for the life which follows death. It is not really death which frightens us, but what is waiting for us on the other side of death. If death takes us over unprepared, there is good ground for fear. Our Lord speaks of "outer darkness" (St. Matthew 8:12) which seems to mean spiritual ostracism, being completely "out of it," as the phrase goes. Hell can mean nothing worse than that. We do well to fear it. But it is just this fear from which Christ sets us free. Do we say, "If only we could be sure of a welcome, sure that we shall be at home, then we could die peacefully, trustfully, as the Lord died on the Cross"? But it is just that assurance which Christ came and lived and died and rose again to give us. He does far more than show us how to die. He enables us to die as He did. In Him the bridge is set in place between heaven and earth; the ladder raised on which the angels come and go for our help. His Kingdom of Heaven is on earth, so that our true citizenship even now may be, not on earth, but in "the heavenly places." He comes Himself and dwells among us in order that, by communion with Him here, our lives may even now be hidden with Him in God. In Him, eternal life, life that has already passed through death, is no mere future promise, but a present fact. For He is our life, here and hereafter. To have Him with us, to keep with Him, is to prepare for death.

Blessed Saviour, from my meditation on Thy death and passion, may I receive a new gift of Thy most Holy Spirit, so that Thy mind may be in me, in life and death:

Thy self-forgetfulness  
Thy thoughtfulness  
Thy loyalty  
Thy patience  
Thy faithfulness  
Thy trustfulness.

O Saviour of the world, who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hath redeemed me, save me and help me, I humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

May the souls of the faithful, in the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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